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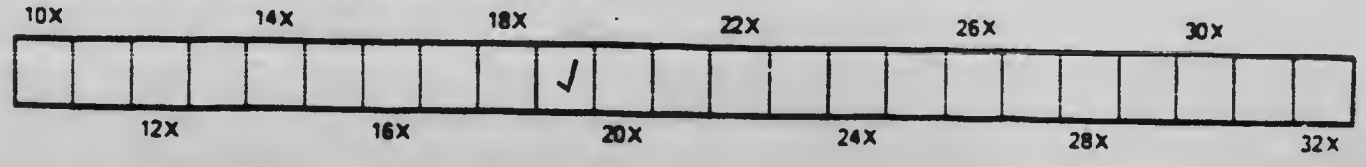

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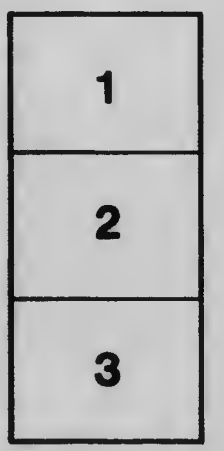

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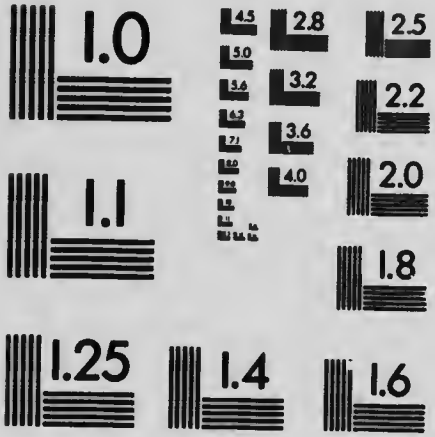

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BY

S. R. CROCKETT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSEPH PENNELL

"Where about the graves of the martyrs
The whaups are crying."

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FOREWORD

CONCERNING WHAT I PROPOSE TO MYSELF AND WHAT NOT

It is my desire, not so much to write a new book about Galloway, as to focus and concentrate what I have already written for the use of Galloway-lovers and Galloway-travellers. I am not making a guide-book, but rather a garrulous literary companion to the guide-books which already exist, and to those which may be written in the future. Secondly, I write not of All Galloway, but only of the part best known to me—that which has, in some degree, come to be called "The Raiders' Country"—about which traditions new and old have materialised themselves with something of the concreteness and exactitude of history. In short, I have no purpose before me, save that of saying what I wish to say in my own way, acknowledging no law save my own fancy, and desiring only to give a true, if incomplete, picture of the Ancient Free Province of Galloway, specially of that more mountainous and easterly portion of it known as the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright.

For a hitherto unfrequented province Galloway is well equipped with books dealing with its history and topography. And these, too, are not stately and costly tomes like the great English County histories, but compact and easily obtainable volumes which may accompany the traveller on his journeyings, or remind him in his easy-chair after his return of the wild land of bog-myrtle and peat where he has been sojourning.

Of the former sort—those which every traveller ought to carry about with him—there are, first of all, Mr. Malcolm Harper's admirable "Rambles in Galloway," a book full of

knowledge and sympathy, savouring alike of the brown moors and of Galloway's oat-cakes and mutton-hams. The author has quite recently brought it up to date, and made it more indispensable than ever to all who wish to understand the history and antiquities of the province.

To Mr. Harper's book ought to be added the excellent and very practical "Guide to the Stewartry" by the late Mr. J. H. Maxwell of Castle-Douglas, the father of a family of journalists, whose writings have been more widely read than those signed by many more famous names.

To these I hope that the smaller edition of "Raiderland" may be added, as a record of the more poetical and imaginative interests of Galloway, as these appear to the present writer.

Of books which may occupy a place in the library of the lover of our mountainous southland, there are many. A full list of them may be found at the end of Sir Herbert Maxwell's excellent "History of Dumfriesshire and Galloway." Of these, my own private shelf contains the following: to wit, two chronicles — Mackenzie's old-fashioned but most readable "History of Galloway"—and (what is indispensable for the critical student), Sir Herbert Maxwell's aforesaid History, in which he applies modern methods to many a good old hoary fiction concocted by the romancers of the times of eld, and leaves his pages plain and truth-telling as mine (fair warning!) are romance-laden and imaginative.

However, I object entirely to the tacking our free and ancient province to the tail of Dumfriesshire. And though Sir Herbert, like a patriotic Gallovidian, generally allows the tail to wag the dog throughout his terse and knowledgeable chapters, still he owes it to his native heather that he should write the History of Galloway more at large, leaving all the Johnstones and Jardines of Annandale and the Border to settle their own moss-trooping affairs.

To the histories ought to be added quaint John Mactaggart's "Galloway Encyclopædia" and Dr. Trotter's two excellent books of "Galloway Gossip." Nothing more racy, more

characteristic of the older Galloway now passing away, has ever been put on paper than Dr. Trotter's reminiscences of an old Scottish housewife, with her prejudices, her opinions and opinionatedness, her scraps of old rhymes and proverbial catchwords. We cannot have too much of such folk-lore put into concise and racy dialect.

To these must be added Professor H. M. B. Reid's "A Cameronian Apostle," a very remarkable and honourable achievement in sympathetic biography, full of digested knowledge, reaching past the outer husk of MacMillan's life to the inner kernel of the man. It is, in my opinion, by far the best Galloway biography ever written, setting a good man's life in the very atmosphere of his time and thinking.

If the shelf be not too full by this time, then the late Sir Andrew Agnew's interesting "Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway" ought to be added, together with an excellently edited and comprehensive selection from "The Bards of Galloway," published by Mr. Harper in 1889.

So much by way of supplement to these random personal chronicles and impressions of mine included in "Raiderland." For the rest, my book has nothing to do with modern improvements or facilities of travel. Railway time-tables and livery stables will supply these. The seeing eye and a good map will point out the castles and mansions of the great. I have not yielded to the advice of friends and booksellers to place a large map in "Raiderland"—first, because maps unfolding out of volumes designed to be read in the open air are temper-ruffling things, all too apt to give employment to the recording angel as they flutter in the breeze. Then in the second place Bartholomew's excellent hand maps can be bought at every book-stall and stationer's counter throughout the province. My business is with the Galloway of brown bent and red heather, of green knowe and grey gnarled thorn, of long low-built farm-town and wild gipsy raid, of Levellers and love-making, of sea-mew and whaup. And in particular and especial, it concerns the Galloway of a certain dreamy long-legged callant who, with a staff in his hand and

a whang of soda-scone in his pocket, left few of its farms unvisited and few of its fastnesses unexplored in his unhaltered boyhood of twenty-five years ago.

If anything be found by the visitor of the twentieth century to have changed, let him take for granted that it was as stated in the sixties and seventies of the previous era. But of this I am not greatly afraid. Galloway will long keep its own flavour, wild and keen as that of heather honey. It is a far cry to Loch Enoch and the Spear of the Merrick. The depths of the Murder Hole will not give up their secret yet a while—whether that secret be the bones of wayfaring men or only of stray black-faced sheep. Nevertheless the western wind will bring even to those who travel in railway haste, wafts of peat-reek and muir-burn from the Clints of Drummore and the Dungeon of Buchan.

Of Mr. Pennell's drawings I need say little. In their several places and relations they will speak for themselves. I have long desired that Galloway should be interpreted by Mr. Pennell's pencil and brush. And I resolved that till my friend could undertake the work, I should not publish this book. Now, however, events have conspired to produce this desirable consummation, and the result is before men's eyes in this volume. It may be interesting to say that I did nothing to guide Mr. Pennell in his choice of subject. I supplied him with a route-plan merely. But it was in all cases his own artist's eye which chose the subject and his own incommunicable touch which interpreted it. As Mr. Pennell had never been in Galloway before, and came to it after a world-wide experience of the beautiful in all lands, I believe that the result will be found singularly fresh and unconventional.

S. R. CROCKETT.

AUCHENCAIRN, GALLOWAY,
1904.

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THE OLD BRIDGE, DUMFRIES

RAIDERLAND

CHAPTER I

THE GATES OF GALLOWAY

TOGETHER WITH THE TALE OF "HOW THE SCHOLAR CAME HOME"

WHEN you step out of Dumfries station under the full moon, as I did the other night, and see the needle-pointed electrics of the line and the mellow glow of the Edison-Swan bulbs over at the Railway Hotel mingling with the red and green and yellow of the more distant signal lamps, you are conscious of a certain brisk elation, a verve and movement which is not provincial. In fact, there is something about the clean sharp-cut brilliance of Dumfries not unlike some of the newer French towns—or even one of the more frequented suburbs of Paris.

Dumfries.

Kirkcudbright, on the other hand, is an old Dutch town, stranded, and as it were half-submerged, on some forgotten beach of the Zuider Zee. Yet the smaller burgh is by far the more picturesque and fruitful in suggestion, both artistic and literary. Or so at least it appears to me. Mysteries, solemn and far-reaching, stir and rustle about it. Imagination quickens at the thought of setting foot in it. Legend clothes it as with a garment. In the sough of its Isle woods, in the solitary thorns which grow for ever in Mr. Henry's "Galloway Landscape," and can be seen in their gnarled reality on the Braes of Loch Fergus, there is something wistful as the Solway winds and mysterious as the Picts themselves.

Kirkcudbright.

But the landscape environment of Dumfries, her brisk atmosphere of trade, are as unromantic and actual as her excellent pavements. In spite of Devorgilla's Bridge and the memories of the sweet sad heart which lies beyond it at Dulce Cor, the "Queen of the South" is of to-day, and was crowned but yesterday.

Only on a wet autumnal gloaming of wailing wind-gusts, shining causeways, and clammy fallen leaves is she at all impressive. For then, at least, we can stand and imagine the funeral of Burns winding its black and tragic way up past the Mid Steeple. For through all the cheerful clatter of the Wednesday market and above the clanking tumult of the Junction, somehow the last days of Robert Burns overwhelm the heart of the thoughtful visitor, and subdue his mood to a fixed and sober melancholy. One looks in vain among the myriad advertisements of inks and soaps and mustards upon the station walls for the one motto which should be emblazoned there—black on a ground of gold—

Burns.

"THE NOBLEST SCOTTISH HEART BROKE HERE."

The Banks of Nith are fair and very fair. Slow, soft, and deep it runs above the bridge, and lies like a windbound lake round the bend towards cloistered Lincluden. But for me, I

own that I am glad to be across Devorgilla's crumbling arches and turning up the Glen of Cluden—or still further, out upon the blasted heath beyond Mossdale, where in a better day he composed "Scots Wha Hae," facing the lashing volleys of the rain with a hero's heart.

I own it—in Dumfries I am as a stranger in a strange land.

THE SHORE ROAD, COLVEND

I visit the Queen of the South. I stall me in her comfortable hotels, still but uneasily, like a horse in an unkenned stable. There are, however (praise the pigs!), fellow Gallovidians to be met with even here, and when I visit them we sit and talk about Galloway a little sadly, as if we were in Cape Town or Timbuctoo.

A Strange Land.

"This is no our ain hoose, we ken by the biggin' o't"—that is, by the raw beef sandstone of its villas, and (humbly I confess it) by the sanitary excellence of its streets. Cross Devorgilla's Brig, and the senses inform you at once that you are in Galloway, a more primitive land, with all things more

in a state of nature, but, so they tell me—and the detail is diagnostic—with cheaper taxes.

Nevertheless, Dumfries is delightful in itself, and many guide-books will inform the curious of the sights thereof.

The Beauties of this Foreign Shore.

But for me, I yearn mostly to cross over to the green braes of Cargen and Cluden, to lose myself in the haunted woods of Goldielee, and to tread the solemn aisles of Sweetheart. Maxwelltown and the bridges—the waterfront of the two towns (mother and daughter), please me most, especially the view from the Galloway side, though I liked Maxwelltown better when it was still called Brigend. Over the water the old prejudice against the city of Burns and Bruce stands fast. Once (says a not too veracious chronicler) they put out a legend over a grocer's door in Maxwelltown—"Coorse meal for Dumfries masons!" Whereof being advised, the 'prentice builders of Dumfries crossed the bridge and broke many windows!

Yet to take the Holywood road by night, and look down through the summer leaves upon the Nith lying cool and calm and deep beneath, with waifs and strays of moonbeams deflected and reflected till they waver faint and mysterious as the northern lights, is to taste anew the wonder of the world, and to believe in water-kelpies and mermaidens combing locks of gold under the shade of birken shaws.

The meadows of Netherholm and Carnsalloch, deep-bosomed in woods, Quarrelwood, steeped in memories of the Covenant men and the meetings of the Cameronian societies, the far-spying uplands of Kirkmahoe—these all come back to the nature-lover laden with the scent of clover and wild thyme. All the summer long the bees are booming among the blossoms, drowsy with the luxury of sweetness, and one can never forget the peculiarly dreamlike atmosphere that overhangs the valley of the Nith, and which has been most perfectly expressed in art by the brush of James Paterson of Moniaive.

The Dreamy Nith Valley.

Still, for all that, Dumfries is but the gateway of better things—rougher, more rugged things. By the grit and rasp

of her Silurian beaches, with the boulders of "auld granny granite girnin' wi' her grey teeth," Galloway beckons us, holds us, attaches even the stranger within her gates till he loves her

THE HILL ROAD INTO AYRSHIRE

with the intemperate zeal of the pervert. Dumfries is a green country, but we seek the Grey Land.

Other things lead up to Galloway, but she is still the goal. Come your ways down by Thornhill and visit the famous strength of Morton on its little hill. It is one of the most striking and picturesque ruins in Scotland. Visit Crichope Linn, and see the rock whence (as tradition avers, and John Faa, Lord and Earl of Little

Thornhill.

Egypt, narrates) Grier of Lag cast the boy who carried the minister's bannocks when on his way to the cave near the Grey Mare's Tail. Explore the bowery ducal village itself. Follow the flashings of the Scaur Water with Ralph Peden and Daft Jock Gordon—now dashing and roaring in a shallow linn, and again dimpling black in some deep and quiet pool. Or, northward away with you along Nithside towards the deep defile of Menick, the great purple overlapping folds of the hills drawing down about your shoulders as you pass.

The Enterkin.

Or lastly, approach Galloway by the Enterkin—that "deep and narrow glen" so excellently described by the author of "Robinson Crusoe," and the scene of one of the most daring of Covenanting exploits—"a most wild and fearsome place, where the hills draw very close together. One of the precipices is called Stey Gail, and is so steep that the sheep grazing upon it are like flies but halfway up!" So plain-spoken Mr. Daniel Foe remarked when he passed that way. On the other side of Enterkin there rises still higher, and almost as steep, the top of the Thirlstane Hill, where is one place where the water runs down the cleft of the mountain and the descent is perpendicular like a wall—so steep, indeed, as Defoe saw it, that "if a sheep die it lies not still, but falls from slope to slope till it end in the Enterkin water."

All which is very remarkable. Only one must consider that good Mr. Foe was more accustomed to the ascent of Ludgate Hill than to the steeps of Enterkin, and a much more credible account of it will be found in Dr. John Brown's charming paper descriptive of his walk through the pass in later and less exclamatory days.

The Four Foot Way.

Nevertheless the railway is, after all, Galloway's main approach. It used to have two front doors, and though the rival companies have to some extent amalgamated, in so far as the Province is concerned, the employees still keep up the feud. I am reminded of my old friend Frank Jardine (his name was

THE APPROACH TO GALLOWAY—UNDER THE LEE OF CRIFFEL

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cognate to that), now, alas! passed from the earth upon which his feet made so firm a footmark. How often have I seen his portly presence gracing the "Caledonian" platform at Carlisle! When first I knew Frank he was traffic superintendent on the Portpatrick line. From his youth he had been trained in a simple creed of two articles—"to swear by the deep indigo blue of the 'Caledonian' and her trim engines, and to hate the apple-green hulks of the 'Glasgow and South-Western.'"

Frank the Abdiel.

So when in an evil day the lines amalgamated for the conduct of their Galloway traffic, Frank applied for a "shift" at once. It was bad enough to see the carriages of the hated G. & S. W. passing and repassing, but to be compelled to hunt officially for their lost trucks was more than Frank could bear. So the P. P. R. knew him no more, and he fled to districts where the Banner of Blue of the 'aledonian" was still unstained by any bar-sinister of South-Western apple-green.

Rest to thine ashes, Frank, faithful servant! Perchance on some celestial line you are to-day hunting non-arrivals, expediting tardive heavies, and charging up demurrages to the debit of disembodied consignees. At least in this life Frank was faithful to his owners and died in his duty—no bad theology, thought Captain Smollett after he had flown the Union Jack over the famous block-house upon Stevenson's Isle of Treasure.

Other Gates to the Galloway Land.

Anciently there were many gates to Galloway, now to all intents and purposes there is but one. Behind horseflesh over the bridge of Dumfries, on foot by Devorgilla's, or by that which carries the shining metals of the Glasgow and South-Western railway, come nineteen out of every twenty who view the land of bog-myrtle and peat. A few struggle in by Girvan and that whaup-haunted single track which, like an insult to nature, scrapes its way past Barrhill and over the peaty watershed into the long glen of the Luce Water. But those who come this way have a

Girvan.

strained, almost terrified look, as of men who have passed great peril and do not care to tell the tale.

Still fewer adventure across from Belfast Lough to Stranraer, seeing behind them the light of Donnachadee lighthouse burn steady across the stormy strait—as from the windows of a Back-shore farmhouse many and many a night I have watched it.

Belfast.

There were also in old time the drove roads, up which two sorts of "nowt" took their way. The first were sheep and bullocks which returned not again, but dreed their weird as mutton and beef after their kind in far-away markets. Then twice a year they were trodden by that other sort of cattle who, as Burns irreverently says, "gang in stirks and come oot asses," as they hied them collegewards over the green sward. Some, doubtless, issued forth long of ear. But not all—by no means all that have gone that way. There is Carlyle, for instance, who, though a mere Dumfriesian (and Annandale at that), deserved to have been born in the Free Province. He was never appreciated in the dales. He and all his clan were thrown away upon Ecclefechan. They were not sib to that soil. They should have dwelt under the shadow of the Windy Standard, a name obviously invented on purpose to be the oriflamme of the stormy Apostle of Silence.

Drove Roads.

Though Carlyle ought of right to have turned off down the Annan Water, yet once at least, coming from visiting Irving at Glasgow, he travelled by the Galloway college road, whereon he and his friend "tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky." On the famous field of Drumclog they held their chief conference —"under the silent bright skies, among the peat-hags of Drumclog, with the world all silent round us—the brown bog all pitted and broken and heathy remnants and bare abrupt wide holes, mostly dry: a flat wilderness of broken bog, of quagmire not to be trusted"—with the lion of Loudon Hill looking down on them as serenely as may be.

Carlyle.

Dear, inexpressibly dear and near to me is the picture of

these two, searching out each other's souls as only young men will—proving all things, yet eager to hold fast that which is good. But—ah too confident certainty of youth—convinced also that they will always be able to hold it fast.

No wonder that the memory of the colloquy is still "mournfully beautiful" to Carlyle fifty years after.

LINCLUDEN ABBEY

"I remember us sitting down," he says, "on the brow of a peat-hag, the sun shining, our own voices the one sound. Far away to the westward over the brown horizon, towered up white and visible at the many miles of distance a high irregular pyramid. Ailsa Craig we at once guessed it, and thought of the seas and oceans over yonder."

Drumclog.

Yet perhaps it was a vision of the things that were to be—the Unattainable shining before the eyes of these two great young men—the Might Have Been, the last glimpse of child-

hood's glittering cloudland before the mists of common day closed about them and the night drew down.

Other two blessed northerly gates there are, both still trackable and rideable even in these days of motor and cycle.

The Windy Standard Way.

I have tried them on foot, which is perhaps the better way. One, a road distinguished by a certain sweet melancholy, lies through great slumberous hills, wide green valleys, past the western Windy Standard (blessed name!). Beyond, it stretches away along Loch Doon and by Dalmellington, from thence making a triple track with the railway and Doon Water all the way to Ayr, where it meets the shining salt levels of the lower Firth of Clyde.

I knew a young lad who, once on a day (and on a night) trod that way, and the memory of his journeying is still fresh, though his flaxen locks begin to sprinkle with the pepper-and-salt of time.

HOW THE SCHOLAR CAME HOME

He was young, only a boy indeed, too early sent to college. So, being the only one in the parish, the Scholar they called him—and as the Scholar we will unravel his story.

The Story of the Scholar.

He dwelt on a farm with a father, stern and unapproachable even in his affections for the son of his old age. Other brothers there were, but not jealous like Joseph's brethren—rather silent, kindly men, lifting every burden that the father's stern eye would let them touch, smoothing the Scholar's path, and ever anxious to thrust the thorns and fallen rocks from before his feet. In short, being so much older than he, they were like fathers and brothers all at once.

One day at the beginning of the hay harvest or thereby it chanced that there was announced a cheap railway excursion from a neighbouring town to Ayr—some cattle show or sheep tryst the effective cause. Two of these elder brothers

THE APPROACH TO DUMFRIES

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(very much *not* according to pattern) having clubbed their small earnings resolved to go, taking the Scholar with them. But a sudden improvement in the weather summoned all hands to the meadow-hay. In a few days the crop might be spoiled. To Ayr Show, therefore, they could not go.

But our Scholar, being of little practical utility at scythe-work, could go an he would. Willing? Aye, truly, and anxious. A most triumphant and victorious Scholar! His father even bade him go, somewhat harshly—with the stern reason roughly expressed that his absence would save more in meat, than his labour in the meadow would earn if he remained. Now this father loved his youngest born, his unmothered boy. Even as Jacob loved Joseph, so he loved him. But this was his Scottish fashion of fitting him with the robe of many colours. The old man owed it to his very love to be stern and hard with his youngest son. There are men made that way. Many pitied the Scholar and thought him hardly used.

"The heart of the old man is set on his first-born sons because they are more help about the farm!" That was, frankly, the countryside opinion. But these unusual elder brethren were not deceived. They knew to whom the best robe belonged, and whose head would one day be held the highest. So, being neither Jews nor Patriarchs, they made no bones about bowing down in service to their Scholar.

And he was a good Scholar. In no way did he abuse his position. Indeed his father faithfully charged himself with that.

So very early in the morning of Ayr Show day the Scholar started off for the town through the cool dewy light of the summer gloaming—two of the brethren, those two who had given him part of their savings, convoying him on his way. A happy Scholar, a Scholar stepping on air and elastic sunshine—his Sunday boots a-squeak on his feet with the feeling of holiday! His very white shirt and collar rasped happiness about his neck.

Add to these things the elation of the spinning train. Think how at junctions and waiting-stations he watched the leisurely manipulations of greasy engine-drivers and grimy firemen. Never before had he been on a railway, and even now he can recall the slack drip-drip of the great leathern hose through which the engine had just taken its Gargantuan draught, the alert stiff-jointed armature of the signals up in the sky, as fresh and gay as paint could make them! Then at long and last Ayr, the blue Firth of Clyde, and the wide bay between the headlands clipping and slapping in the brisk north wind, which made it all indigo and foam to the boy's eyes.

The Heads of Ayr.

The Scholar made straight for the shore. Beautiful shells beset him, chipped and rounded pebbles, the famous agates of the Heads of Ayr, tempted him at every step. Yet he fled back that he might have one glimpse of Burns's Cottage. But even here he secretly grudged the time which he lost, away from the seashore and the strange electric clapping palms of the little waves as they cheered each other on. Think of it! He had actually never smelt salt water before.

"Cattle! Tryst! Prizes! Competitions!" They were all a vain show! The Scholar never once thought of them. He could see sheep and bullocks enough at home—and he liked them, especially if they would only stay calves and lambs. But here ——!

Well, the Scholar thought he knew something better. Somewhere in the distance he divined the *mool* and *brool* of the showyard. He resented the very aroma as it came to him down the wind. He saw gaily-dressed girls and solid country men in black clothes and wide-awake hats of shepherd shape moving steadily to the one goal. But for him—why, Greenan Castle, the wide pleasance of the shore, the tang of the seaweed in his nostrils, the rasping saltness of the pebbles when he licked them to bring out the colours—that was life. "Cattle shows—faugh!"

It was indeed a high day of tumultuous gladness and fine

confused emotion to the Scholar. He forgot everything but the heavens above calling to the earth beneath, and the seas applauding both. His spirit was at one with Nature—a most imaginative and dreamy Scholar, though at that time noways sentimental. He cared no more for a girl in holiday white

THE LONG WOOD OF GOLDIELEA

than for a sea-bird. Both wore the same colours, that was all. An Arcadian born out of his due time, the Scholar was still constrained by cheap excursion trains and the mystery of return tickets.

Not that the Scholar minded either of th e. If he had, this true tale would never have been written. He only wandered on and on, and the first thing which reminded him that he was not a spirit in unison with the air and the

water and the earth, was a most persistent and appalling hunger. He had been vaguely conscious of a want for some time, but the sight of a good housewife at a cottage door near the shore setting out a bicker of porridge to cool, localised the vacancy sharply in the pit of his stomach.

Whereupon he drew his hoarded pence out of his pocket, counted them, and going up to the woman he asked cunningly for a drink of water.

The woman smiled, and said, "Ye will be wantin' it in a milky bowl?"

The Scholar smiled, and said as to that he had no objection.

"Then come your ways ben," answered the goodwife, "and sit ye doon. Ye'll be a stranger comed to see the show? Weel, an' what for are ye wanderin' here? Frae Galloway? A' that road? To see Burns's Cottage—and the Sands—and Ailsa? Ye hae comed far for verra little! But there—that will put some fushion intil ye, and then ye can gang your ways back to the showyaird and get in for saxpence after the judgin' is by!"

And so and so, with porridge and good milk and his pence upon him, the Scholar tasted the wholesome Ayrshire hospitality.

When he took his leave Ayr-ward, the woman pressed on him a couple of soda-scones.

"Ye never ken when ye may be glad o' them," she said; "hunger comes on young things like a ravenin' wolf!"

Which indeed shows that the thoughts of youth had not died out of her bosom with wifehood and mother cares. And indeed the Scholar had great reason to bless her foresight and motherhood before all was done.

But on the way to the station the boy's good angel deserted him—or perhaps was momentarily displaced by a better angel. For the Scholar lingered, just as if there were not such a thing as a railway time-table on the face of the earth. And neither there was—for him. For when he demanded with weak and feeble utterance when the train would start,

he was told that it had already gone—and that his ticket, being an excursion pasteboard, would frank him by no other.

What then must he do?

That was easy—buy another!

But the Scholar had no money, or not nearly enough to purchase the meanest single ticket that could be bought—no, not so much as "a half." So, with a sudden thrill that was not all unpleasant, he turned away from the crowded station, going out through the rabble, growing noisy now and staggery upon its legs.

The Scholar never thought of going to besiege any great man in authority—station-master or other. He would as soon have petitioned Her Majesty's High Court of Parliament. He only turned away a little sadly, wandered from street to street making up his mind, suddenly made it up, and bought two Jew's loaves. He can smell those loaves yet. They were a day old, and ripe for the tooth. Each had nine currants in, four above, five below, all visible to the naked eye—no deception!

Then he went up to a shepherd with his dog, all electricity and curling tail amid the unwonted press, and demanded to be put on the Carsphairn road.

"Boy," said the herd, looking down upon the Scholar as if from a mountain-top, "ye are never thinkin' of ga'in' to Carsphairn the nicht?"

"Aye," said the Scholar, speaking with a kind of joy; "for when I get to Carsphairn, I'll be near-hand half-road hame!"

He had heard his father say so.

Then the herd, thinking that he was being jested with, raised his staff to strike. But the Scholar did not run away, jeering as is the way of callants in the wicked town of Ayr. He stood his ground and repeated his question.

"Which is the road to Carsphairn—the best road—the quickest road?"

"There is but ae road to Carsphairn," said the herd, "and

as I gang wi' ye a bittock—ye may een bide the nicht wi' me, and we'll see what can be dune wi' ye in the mornin'!"

The Scholar thanked him kindly. But on the morrow, you see, he had promised to be back at that farmhouse near the Dee Water to help with the hay. His father—still more his brothers—would be wild about him. Elder Brother William was to be in waiting at the train looking for him! Go he must and would. And so, if he pleased—the road to Carsphairn?

The Carsphairn Road.

And the herd, with his sheep-dogs, his pleasant moorland eyes under the shaggy eyebrows, bleached and tufted like those of his own collies, soon dropped behind, and the Scholar fared forth alone.

In an hour he was clear of the turmoil. In two he had settled into his stride, and was devouring the miles. At Patna he had his second streak of luck, and got a lift to Dalmellington, together with much counsel from a farmer who had driven his gig all the way to Ayr to get his "greybeard" filled, and who felt in the gig-box every hundred yards or so to see that nothing had happened to it. No one could take that responsibility but himself, but it was almost too much even for him.

Dalmellington.

To this friend our Scholar owed no little. He also urged him to stay the night. But the Scholar pressed on, eager at least to put himself within the confines of Galloway. He yearned to see green Cairnsmore swelling with its double breasts; for, from the craggy summits of his paternal hills, on clear, northerly-blowing days, he could see the cloud shadows fleck great Cairnsmore o' Carsphairn. So up the long valley sped the Scholar, under the gentle cloud of night. Here, in June, the nights are mostly clear and merciful. But there was a weird quality in the light. Towards twelve of the clock every broombush loomed up like a phantom leaning forward to clutch at his throat. A scurrying rabbit set him quivering with vague but very real alarms. So he passed from adven-

ture to adventure. At Meadowhead something "routed" at him from over a wall—a white face with horns it was, and sufficiently appalling. The Scholar did not wait to investigate, and the next mile was his quickest time.

Presently he found a shelter by the wayside, under an overhanging bank, with heather deep above and below. The Scholar buttoned the neck of his jacket and curled himself up, with a sigh like a tired puppy. When he awoke the sun was shining on the green flanks of Cairnsmore. He knew it by instinct, though its rearward parts looked very different.

The Scholar leaped to his feet in haste, and, without more than the shake and yawn of a stretching dog, trotted out again on the southward road.

At Carsphairn a woman, sweeping her doorstep in the clear early light, looked curiously after the small hasting stranger. But he was out of sight before she could make up her mind what to say to the lad, though she had good in her heart. A vast amount of things, good and evil alike, never happen in Galloway, just because the good and ill doers cannot make up their minds to take action in time. **Carsphairn.**

The rest of the way, so far as the Scholar knew, was a maze of wearied feet and swimming head. He grew too tired to care about being hungry any more. On and on—past Dalshangan, Strangassel, we can see the little hasting figure growing ever more white-faced and pathetic.

At Glenlee a dog barked at him, and the Scholar created a momentary interest in the dog's master, a ruddy young gentleman with a gun over his shoulder. Then he saw the houses of St. John's Town glisten white, across on the green bank of the Water of Ken. **The Glen of Ken.**

As he passed New Galloway, his pallid face and limping feet brought the good-wives to the doors. But he hasted through, and so out of their reach into the leafy aisles of Kenmure wood.

Then the loch opened out, and the Scholar seemed to walk light-headed in a world of misty brightness. Flashes came and went before his eyes, and he reeled with mere sleep. Nay more, in very truth, I think he *was* sometimes asleep upon his feet, hasting and halting ever southward.

About noon he came to the beginning of his own territories, and a herd on the heather over a dyke called to him by name to know what he did there when he should have been in the meadow. But the Scholar was too far gone to talk. He could only move his lips, and make a faint whistling noise in his parched throat.

Home.

An hour after he stumbled up the little green loaning, across the watering-place, and so by the cattle-yard to the door. He fell across it. His father lifted him up in his arms and carried him in. Then something was poured down his throat, and with a nasty taste and a burning feeling in his mouth, he came to himself. He felt comfortable now, and by-and-by could talk. His father listened till he was done, and then said sternly, "Put on clean stockings and your everyday claes, and away doon with you to the hay! That will learn ye to miss trains, and put them that love ye in fear for your life!"

And because obedience was the first if not the sole law of the house, the Scholar rose and hirpled painfully meadowwards, where his elder brothers greeted him with joy, and Elder Brother William, with a careful eye on the coming of his father, made him a lair behind a cole of hay. Upon this the Scholar fell down, and passed (even as a candle is blown out) instantly into dreamless sleep.

Nor did his father come near the meadow all the afternoon, but stayed on the hill with his sheep—knowing very well what would be happening down there where the forks were tossing out the hay and the warm June winds blowing. For though a stern man and a just, this father had pity unto his children.

ON THE SOLWAY

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Now the very commonplace moral of all this is that the Scholar, though still dreamy and absent-minded beyond words, has never missed another train in his life.

And this is the last of the Ways into Galloway, and one which is not trodden in such fashion twice.

A GALLOWAY FARM

CHAPTER II

THE HEART OF GALLOWAY

FOUR GALLOWAY FARMS

I.—THE FARM BY THE WATERSIDE

The Duchrae of Balmaghie

I BEGIN this book of set purpose with that which interests me most—with what set its stamp deepest upon me, in these bright days when the sun had not long risen, and the feel of morning was in the blood.

The farm I know best is also the loveliest for situation. It lies nestled in green holm crofts. The purple moors ring it half round, north and south. To the eastward pinewoods once stood ranked and ready like battalions clad in indigo and Lincoln green against the rising sun—that is, till one fell year when the woodmen swarmed all along the slopes and the ring of axes was heard everywhere. The earliest scent I can remember is that of fresh pine chips, among which my mother laid me while she and her brothers gathered "kindling" among the yet

The Farm I know best.

unfallen giants. Too young to walk, I had to be carried pick-a-back to the wood. But I can remember with a strange clearness the broad spread of the moor beneath over which we had come, the warmth of the shawl in which I was wrapped, the dreamy scent of the newly cut fir-chips in which they had left me nested—above all, I recall a certain bit of blue sky that looked down at me with so friendly a wink, as a white racing cloud passed high overhead.

In the Fir Wood.

Such is the first beginning that I remember of that out-door life, to which ever since my eyes have kept themselves wide-open. Of indoor things one only is earlier.

It was a warm harvest day—early September, most likely—all the family out at the oats, following the slow sweep of the scythe or the crisper *crop* of the reaping-hook. Silence in the little kitchen of the Duchrae! Only my grandmother padding softly about in her list slippers (or *hoshens*), baking farles of cake on the "girdle," the round plate of iron described by Froissart. The door and windows were open, and without there spread that silence in comparison with which the hush of a kirkyard is almost company—the silence of a Scottish farmyard in the first burst of harvest.

The Plum-Coloured Cradle.

And I—what was I doing? I know not, but this I do know—that I came to myself lying under the hood of an old worm-eaten cradle of a worn plum-colour, staring at my own bare toes which I had set up on the bar at the cradle-foot!

These two memories, out-door and in-door, have stood out clear and distinct all my life, and do so now. Nor could I have been told of them afterwards, for there was nothing in either which concerns any but myself.

The Loch came after. It lay beneath, at what seemed a Sabbath day's journey from the house of Duchrae, down a wonderful loaning, full of infinite marvels. Beyond a little stile there was a group of oak trees, from one of which a swing depended. There was also a sugar-plum tree, under which I

first learned the difference which exists between *meum* and *tuum*, a little brook that rippled across the road (now, I fear, ignominiously conveyed in a drain-pipe), at which the horses were watered night and morning, and where I gat myself muddied and soaking—but afterwards, upon discovery, also well warmed.

Then close by the highway is an unforgotten little elbow of road. The loaning runs straight up and down now, but you can still see the bend of the old path and the green bank—nay, only I know where to look for that—the bank on which my mother sat and sang me "The Lord's my Shepherd" on Sabbath afternoons.

For of all those who were a part of these things, only one now remains upon the earth. The rest are over the hill yonder, in the Balmaghie kirkyard, the sweetest and the sunniest God's Acre in Scotland, and since such things must needs be, doubtless a right desirable place for any tired wanderer's resting-grave.

Then through the gate—no, the yett—and you are on the road to New Galloway. But keep straight forward a little way, and you will find the quaintest and most delicious bridge across the narrows of Woodhall Loch, just where the Lane of Dee runs down to feed the Black Water of Dee through a paradise of pebbly shallows and reedy pools. Still black stretches they are also, all abloom with the loveliest white water-lilies anchored in lee of beds of blonde meadowsweet and red willow-herb.

Such a heavenly place for a boy to spend his youth in!

A Heavenly Place for Youth.

The water-meadows, rich with long deep grass that one could hide in standing erect, bog-myrtle bushes, hazel-nuts, and brambles big as prize gooseberries and black as—well, as our mouths when we had done eating them. Woods of tall Scotch firs stood up on one hand, oak and ash on the other. Out in the wimpling fairway of the Black Lane, the Hollan Isle lay anchored. Such a place for nuts! You could get back-loads and back-loads of them to break your teeth upon

in the winter forenights. You could ferry across a raft laden with them. Also, and most likely, you could fall off the raft yourself and be well-nigh drowned. You might play hide-and-seek about the Camp, which (though marked "probably Roman" in the Survey Map) is no Roman camp at all, but instead only the last fortification of the Levellers in Galloway—those brave but benighted cottiers and crofters who rose in belated rebellion because the lairds shut them out from their poor moorland pasturages and peat-mosses.

Their story is told in that more recent supplement to "The Raiders" entitled "The Dark o' the Moon."[1] There the record of their deliberations and exploits is in the main truthfully enough given, and the fact is undoubted that they finished their course within their entrenched camp upon the Duchrae bank, defying the king's troops with their home-made pikes and rusty old Covenanting swords.

The Levellers.

"There is a ford (says this chronicle) over the Lane of Grennoch, near where the clear brown stream detaches itself from the narrows of the loch, and a full mile before it unites its slow-moving lily-fringed stream with the Black Water o' Dee rushing down from its granite moorlands."

The Lane of Grennoch seemed to that comfortable English drover, Mr. Job Brown, like a bit of Warwickshire let into the moory boggish desolations of Galloway. But even as he lifted his eyes from the lily-pools where the broad leaves were already browning and turning up at the edges, lo! there, above him, peeping through the russet heather of a Scottish October, was a boulder of the native rock of the province, lichened and water-worn, of which the poet sings—

> "See yonder on the hillside scaur,
> Up amang the heather near and far,
> Wha but Granny Granite, auld Granny Granite,
> Girnin' wi' her grey teeth."

If the traveller will be at the pains to cross the Lane of

[1] Macmillan & Co.

Grennoch, or, as it is now more commonly called, the Duchrae Lane, a couple of hundred yards north of the bridge, he will find a way past an old cottage, the embowered pleasure-house of many a boyish dream, out upon the craggy face of the Crae Hill. Then over the trees and hazel bushes of the Hollan Isle, he will have (like Captain Austin Tredennis) a view of the entire defences of the Levellers and of the way by which most of them escaped across the fords of the Dee Water, before the final assault by the king's forces.

The "Roman Camp."

"The situation was naturally a strong one—that is, if, as was at the time most likely, it had to be attacked solely by cavalry, or by an irregular force acting without artillery.

"In front the Grennoch Lane, still and deep with a bottom of treacherous mud swamps, encircled it to the north, while behind was a good mile of broken ground, with frequent marshes and moss-hags. Save where the top of the camp mound was cleared to admit of the scant brushwood tents of the Levellers, the whole position was further covered and defended by a perfect jungle of bramble, whin, thorn, sloe, and hazel, through which paths had been opened in all directions to the best positions of defence."

Such about the year 1723 was the place where the poor, brave, ignorant cottiers of Galloway made their last stand against the edict which (doubtless in the interests of social progress and the new order of things) drove them from their hillside holdings, their trim patches of cleared land, their scanty rigs of corn high in lirks of the mountain, or in blind "hopes" still more sheltered from the blast.

Opposite Glenhead, at the uppermost end of the Trool valley, you can see when the sun is setting over western Loch Moan and his rays run level as an ocean floor, the trace of walled enclosures, the outer rings of farm-steadings, the dyke-ridges that enclosed the home-crofts, small as pocket-handkerchiefs; and higher still, ascending the mountain-side, regular as the stripes on corduroy, you can trace the ancient rigs where the corn once bloomed bonny even in

Evictions.

these wildest and most remote recesses of the hills. All is now passed away and matter for romance—but it is truth

THE DUCHRAE WOOD ROAD

all the same, and one may tell it without fear and without favour.

From the Crae Hill, especially if one continues a little to the south till you reach the summit cairn above the farmhouse of Nether Crae, you can see many things. For one thing you are in the heart of the Covenant Country.

"He pointed north to where on Auchencloy Moor the slender shaft of the Martyrs' Monument gleamed white among the darker heather—south to where on Kirkconnel hillside Grier of Lag found six living men and left six corpses—west towards Wigton Bay, where the tide drowned two of the bravest of womankind, tied like dogs to a stake—east to the kirkyards of Balmaghie and Crossmichael, where under the trees the martyrs of Scotland lie thick as gowans on the lea."[1]

The Country of the Covenant.

Save by general direction you cannot take in all these by the seeing of the eye from the Crae Hill. But you are in the midst of them, and the hollows of the hills where the men died for their "thocht," and the quiet God's Acres where they lie buried, are as much of the essence of Scotland as the red flushing of the heather in autumn and the hill tarns and "Dhu Lochs" scattered like dark liquid eyes over the face of the wilds.

Chiefly, however, I love the Crae Hill because from there you get the best view of the Duchrae, where for years a certain lonely child played, and about which in after years so many poor imaginings have worked themselves out. Here lived and loved one Winsome Charteris—also a certain Maisie Lennox, with many and many another. By that fireside sat night after night the original of Silver Sand, relating stories with that shrewd beaconing twinkle in the eye which told of humour and experience deep as a draw-well and wide as the brown-backed moors over which he had come.

The Duchrae.

From these low-lying craigs in front of the farm buildings, one Kit Kennedy saw the sun raise its bleared winter-red eye over the snows of Ben Gairn as he hied him homewards after feeding the sheep. Cleg Kelly turned somersaults by the side

[1] "The Stickit Minister," p. 109. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

of that crumbling wall, and a score of boys have played out their life games among the hazels of that tangled waterside plantation which is still to-day the Duchrae Bank.

There is indeed little difference about the house since the place was really Craig Ronald—a new porch to the door, new roofs to the farm buildings, the pleasant front garden quite abolished. These make the sum of the differences you will find when you go up the loaning and look for a moment at the white cottage-farm, where once on a time some of the earth's excellent ones were passing rich on a good deal less than forty pounds a year. The farm by the waterside is at its best in harvest, or perhaps—

> "About the Lammas-tide,
> When the moor men win their hay."

Then you may chance to find something like this: "Silence deep as that of yesterday wrapped about the farm-house of Craig Ronald. The hens were all down under the lee of the orchard hedge, chuckling and chunnering low to themselves, and nestling with their feathers spread balloon-wise, while they flirted the hot summer dust over them. It fell upon their droopy and flaccid combs. Down where the grass was in shadow a mower was sharpening his blade. The clear metallic sound of the 'strake' or sharpening strop, covered with pure white Loch Skerrow sand set in grease, cut through the slumberous hum of the noonday air as the blade itself cuts through the meadow grass. The bees in the purple flowers beneath the window boomed a mellow bass, and the grasshoppers made love by millions in the couch grass, *chirring* in a thousand fleeting raptures."

Coming down the Crae Hill, let us return, not by the bridge, but by the front of the deserted cottage. On your right, as you descend through the pinewood, is a tiny islet, crowded standing-room for half-a-dozen grown men, but an entire continent for a boy to explore in the long days of the blanket-washing, when all the women-folk of

Below the Bridge.

the farm were down there boiling their great pots, rubbing and scrubbing and rinsing till for twenty yards the brown loch water was tinged with a strange misty blue. Some years ago, Sweetheart and I found it still covered as of yore with All-heal and Willow-herb; while the Lane of Duchrae, beginning its course towards the Black Water, went soughing and murmuring over the slippery pebbles just as it had been wont to do a good quarter-century before.

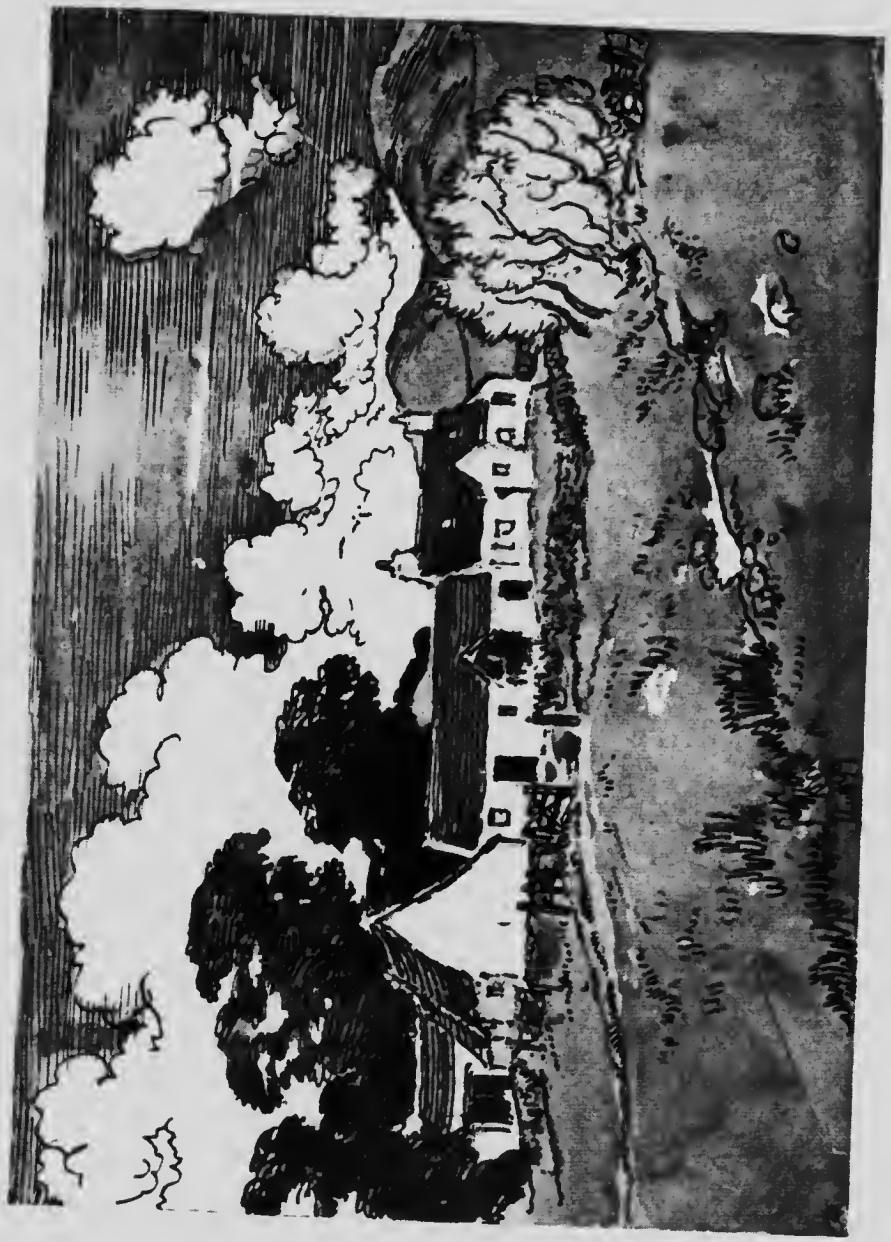
Dan's Ford.

There, straight before us, at Dan's Ford, is the most practical and delightsome set of stepping-stones in the world, just tall enough for one to slip off and splash unexpectedly into the coolness of the water. Or you can sit, as Sweetheart and I used to do, upon the big central one and eat your lunch, as much isolated as Crusoe upon his island, the purl of the leaves and the murmur of the ford the only sounds in that sweet still place. Looking down, you can see at the bottom of the water long feathery streamers of moss and a little green starry water-plant (I do not know its name), which I can remember to have tickled my toes, as I waded there, when as yet neither the dignity nor the inconvenience of trousers were mine.

Sweetheart's Well.

If the day be hot, and you would have water of the finest to drink, there is the wayside well a little farther on the road towards New Galloway Station. Just underneath the bank you will find it. It has, I fear, been a little cribbed, cabined, and confined by the official roadmen, but still there are some cupfuls of water, cool and delicious, in the deepest shadow. And if you have no cup—why, take the joined palms of your hands, as Sweetheart and I did in the Long-Time-Ago.

Going towards New Galloway Station you keep your face northward, and the road winds between lilied waters and the steep tangle of the wood. On those fair green braes above the birches Will Gordon and Maisie Lennox played at Wanderers and King's Men. And we, like these two, may easily (that is, if we go at the right season) find the dales and holms pranked with hawthorn and broad gowans, and in the wood-



THE DUCHRAE

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land hiding-places frail little wild-flowers lurking like hunted Covenanters or escaping Levellers.

Sabbath at the Farm

Ah, that was another matter. Still—still with a great stillness, peaceful with an exceeding peace broke the morning of the Sabbath Day over our Galloway farm. The birds did not sing the same. The cocks crowed with a clearer, a more worshipful note. There was a something in the very sunshine as it lay on the grass that was not of the weekday. A mellower, more restful hush breathed abroad in the Sabbath air.

Necessary duties and services were earlier and more quietly gone about, so that nothing might interfere with the after solemnities. Yet Sunday was by no means a day of privation or discouragement for the boy. For not only was his path strewn with "let ups" from too much gravity by sympathising seniors, but he even discovered "let ups" for himself, in everything that ran or swam or flew, in heaven or earth or the waters under.[1] **The Sabbath Air.**

Usually when the boy awoke, the sun had long been up, and already all sounds of labour, generally so loud, were hushed about the farm. There was a breathless silence, and the boy knew even in his sleep that it was the Sabbath morning. He arose, and, unassisted, arrayed himself for the day. Then he stole forth, hoping that he would get his porridge before the "buik" came on. Through the little end window he could see his grandfather moving up and down outside, leaning on his staff—his tall, stooping figure very clear against the background of oaks. As he went he looked upward, often in self-communion, and sometimes groaned aloud in the instancy of his unspoken prayer. His brow rose like the wall of a fortress. A stray white lock on his bare head stirred in the crisp air. The boy was about to omit his prayers in his eagerness for porridge, but the sight of his grandfather induced him to change his mind. He knelt reverently down, and was

[1] "Bog-Myrtle and Peat." (Sands & Co.)

so found when his mother came in. She stood for a moment on the threshold, and silently beckoned the good mistress of the house forward to share the sight. But neither of the women knew how near the boy's prayers came to being entirely omitted that morning. And what is more, they would not have believed it had they been informed of it by the angel Gabriel. For this is the manner of women—the way that mothers are made.

To the breakfast so nearly unblessed, followed the solemn service of the "Buik"—the "Taking of the Book," a kind of consecration and thanksgiving in one—a consecration of the coming week, a thanksgiving for that which had been left behind. The "Buik" was the key to the life, simple, austere, clear-eyed, forth-looking, yet not unjoyous, of that Cameronian household—in some wise also the key to Scotland and to its history for three hundred years.

"The Taking of the Buik."

The family gathered without spoken summons or stroke of bell. No one was absent, or could be absent for any purpose whatsoever. The great Bible, clad rough-coated in the hairy hide of a calf, was brought down from the press and laid at the table-end. The head of the house sat down before it and bowed himself. In all the world there was a silence that could be felt. It was at this time every Sabbath morning that Walter resolved to be a good boy for the entire week. The psalm was reverently given out, two lines at a time.

> "They in the Lord that firmly trust,
> Shall be like Zion hill."

It was sung to the high wistful strains of "Coleshill," garnished with endless quavers and grace-notes. Followed the reading of the Word—according to the portion. The priest of the family read, as he had sung, "in his ordinary." That is to say, he read the Bible straight through, morning and evening, even as he sang the Psalms of David (Paraphrases and mere human hymns being anathema) from the first to the hundred-and-fiftieth,

To this succeeded the prayer, when as with one motion all reverently knelt. When the minister came of an afternoon and "offered up a prayer," that was a regular "service" and all stood. But when a man prayed in his own house or asked a stranger to conduct family worship for him, the household knelt. This last was the highest compliment that could be paid in the waterside farm to any son of Adam, and to one man only was it ever paid in my recollection—to the venerable ruling elder of the Cameronian Kirk of Castle-Douglas, Matthew Craig of Airieland.

The prayer was like the singing—full of unexpected grace-notes. But there was no liturgy, no repetition of phrases such as men less spiritual make for themselves. It was full, as it dropped unconsciously from the speaker's lips, of an unconscious poetry. It was steeped in mysticism, and a-dream with yearnings and anticipations, with wistful hopes and painful confessions—all expressed in the simplest and strongest Biblical words and imagery.

Then the Buik being over, the red farm cart rattled sedately away down the loaning on its nine-mile journey, passing on its way Kirks Free and Kirks Established, to deposit its passengers at the Cameronian Kirk on the Hill, where their ancestors had listened to the preached Word throughout their generations, ever since the foundations thereof were laid stone upon his stone.

The Kirk-going.

The red cart was reserved for the aged and the women. Also sometimes it carried a certain boy, more or less willing to endure hardness, but, at any rate, not consulted in the matter. The men folk, uncles long-legged and strapping, with mayhap a friend or two, cut through by the Water o' Dee, passing Balmaghie Kirk, and so reached the Kirk on the Hill an hour before the red cart rattled up the street—so prompt to its time that the dwellers in streets averse from the town clock set their watches by it.

More often, however, the boy remained gratefully behind, and after a careful survey of the premises, he usually went

behind the barn to relieve his mind in a rough-and-tumble with the collie dogs, which, wearing like himself accurately Sunday faces, had been present at the worship, but now the red cart once out of the way, were very willing to relapse into such mundane scufflings, grippings, and scourings of the countryside as to prove them no right Cameronians of the blue.

II.—DRUMBRECK UNDERNEATH THE FLOWE

After the Duchrae, the Galloway farm I know best is Drumbreck. It is the second of the line of three white farmsteadings which look towards Laurieston village across the meadowlands to the south—Quintainespie, Drumbreck, and Bargatton being their names.

Of Drumbreck my knowledge belongs to a later time. School holidays were spent here among a generation almost wholly passed away. The main difference between the Duchrae and Drumbreck was that at the latter they "kept a man," generally also "a boy," and often "a servant lass."

Two Kinsmen.

Two dear and trusty kinsmen held the farm together—grave, thoughtful, all-reliable men, full of humour too and "respecktit" far and near. A right pleasant house to dwell in was Drumbreck in those days. How I had Shakespeare and Cary's "Dante" drilled into me by him from whose character (not from whose history) I drew "The Stickit Minister." I can still see the elder brother with his back on the sofa deep in politics or sheep-sales—the younger and I meanwhile reading page and page together of Carlyle, Macaulay, Tennyson, Milton—or, perhaps, only Knight's "Pictorial History of England"—noting, discussing, arguing, quarrelling all at once!

"Oh, laddie," I can hear his cry ring reproachful to this hour, "will ye no believe? The assurance! D'ye no see that Macaulay says it? There it is in printers' ink!"

NEAR WOODHALL LOCH, LAURIESTON

"I dinna care if the Man in the Moon said it," I would reply to provoke him, "I dinna believe a word of it!"

But here, in the stillness which fell on the farm when the "men" were out at work, I lived a life free as any bird.

A Lonely Boy.

Meal-times marked not my life, for owing to household favouritism in high quarters, dinner, tea, and supper had no definite hours for me. They were ready in that bounteous house when I dropped in from the tree-tops—literally—or from among the tussocks and black hags of the moss, or all adrip from the reedy-weedy lochs which star the great flowe between Bargatton and Glentoo.

There is a huge slate, now deeply sunk in beech-wood, on which, when that beech was young, I used to sit swinging my legs into space and reading every book which I could beg, borrow or steal—Chambers's "Edinburgh Journal," "Hogg's Instructor," the two volumes of Chambers's "English Literature"—the last pored over to the point of illegibility and accounted a most marvellous treasure. These were for long my chiefest text-books. To which be added, with the ever-present Shakespeare, a red-bound reprint of the works of a certain great unappreciated poet, Longfellow by name, soiled with all ignoble use in primers and recitation books.

But the natural feature most characteristic of Drumbreck is the imminence and omnipresence of the high peat Flowe above it. The arable fields are but islets in an encompassing peat-moss—hardly won indeed, and yet more hardly kept by generations of good husbandry. To which be added meadows to the west with slow black water "lanes," dank and weedy, winding through them, then the haunt of coot and water-rat, and an admirable practice-ground for the use of the leaping-pole.

The Upper Flowe.

Even the paths which lead to the little house knoll, with its tall beech-trees and white farm buildings, are mere threads through the marshes, often overflowed at Espie Meadow or about Bargatton March.

But high above, imminent and mysterious, stretched the

LAURIESTON BRIDGE

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chief joy of my life at Drumbreck—the Flowe, grey with bent and red with heather, by no means continuous, but, as it were, all in hummocks and tummocks, with green wet patches between, over which at most times of the year one must leap.

"*Peewit!—Pee-wooo! Curly-wee-ee-ee!*" So the birds went. Whinnying bleat of snipe, swooping wail of lapwing, the wild *tremolo* of the whaup! If I forget thee, Flowe of Drumbreck, may my right hand forget his cunning. And I loved the moor-birds, though most of them were deemed birds of ill omen—the whaup perhaps from some fanciful resemblance of curved beak to the horns of "auld Sawtan, Nick, or Clootie"—and the peewit, because in that Covenanting country its senseless clamour and the energy with which it keeps the pot boiling when man invades the domain it considers its own, often guided the troopers to the hiding-place of the wanderers for conscience' sake. Any one who attempts to cross the Flowe of Drumbreck from the middle of April to the end of July, will easily be convinced that many of those martyr graves which flower the heather of Scotland owe their position to the noisy curiosity of this ill-conditioned, unchancy, yammering bird.

It was at least partly in revenge for this peculiarity that, having discovered four marled eggs laid small ends together on some bed of bent, I avenged the fallen Covenanters in a simple and natural fashion. With a paper of salt in one's pocket and a crust or two of bread, one may go far in the early nesting season and live daintily all the way.

The Avenging of the Martyrs.

Above the Flowe of Drumbreck grey plover, golden plover, and snipe swung and stooped in the lift—and, I dare say, do so still. On the moor itself whin-chat and stone-chat "knapped" among the gall-bushes, for all the world like stone-breakers in their little square niches by the side of the king's highway.

Straight for the centre of the moss I made, where, screened from view, at peace with all men, I drew a book from my pocket and fell to—the world meantime swinging along as

unregarded as the great white-sailed cloud-galleons aloft. But, here as at my own birthplace, it was my lot to be a child alone, or (what is the same thing) a child among grown-ups—a child whose plays are in his head, never entrusted to another, shared by none, to himself sufficient—so that all unconsciously he forms the habit of never being less alone than when alone.

The which may be a good thing or not, according to the child.

Night Adventure.

In later days, with Drumbreck as a centre, there opened out a new world of night adventure, of visitations far afield, of practical jests, all the mirth of farm-ingles and merry meetings under cloud of night. But the time to speak of such things is not yet, and indeed that is another tale altogether. But if you would know what it is like—why, you can read the story of the loves of Nance and the Hempie in a book called "Lads' Love."

III.—THE BIG FARM

Airieland

Airieland.

When I went first to Airieland it struck me that I had never seen so big a place. The barns were great as churches. The ploughmen, the herds, and the cotmen formed an army in themselves. The name of the harvesters was legion. The Big Hoose was a palace, every room of which I soon transformed into pure romance by attaching to it some story I had read or dreamed or simply "made up." But my proper domain was the basement—the kitchen and the parts adjoining. The mere size and space of these comprised a marvel—the Dairy, the Cheese Room, the Laundry—all with their names and styles marked in white script across the doors, even as the pews in the parish church were inscribed with the names of the farms to which they pertained.

The whisk and scutter of the rat-armies behind the plaster, and the headlong way in which they used to run races apparently from the rigging to the cellars of the old house, struck

my soul with a fearful admiration. This used to increase when my aunt left me to sup my porridge alone in the darkening gloaming, while she went above stairs to argue with her mistress or tell the lady of the house what she was to have for supper.

Then during these awful moments I could see rat after rat stealing across the further wall in awful pantomime. One, I can remember well, used to sit up and wash its face. But I thought it was only saying grace before meat, ere it hurled itself at my throat.

However, as I grew older, these terrors became no longer aff-ighting. I grew learned in catapults, and in time avenged my former fears by the slaughter of more than one rat, killing necessarily "upon the wing"—not from sporting reasons or pride of marksmanship, but "because the brutes would not sit still."

The Leddy and her Mistress.

The Leddy of Airieland, gentle, gracious, kindly above women, was (nominally) my aunt's mistress. My kinswoman was in service—also nominally. Really her will was unquestioned both above stairs or below. So much I gathered even at that early age. Such a relationship could not exist, or at least hardly, in these later and more mercenary times.

The Laird of Airieland, when he passed our way, abode in my grandfather's house as guest with host. He it was who alone was permitted to "tak' the Buik" in the presence of the head of the family. Then for a whole long forenoon they would talk the Fundamentals over together, or settle point by point the minister's last sermon, shaking grave heads over many a doubtful "application" and shamefully undeveloped "particular."

"And Jen?" the host would ask casually after a pause. He was inquiring for his daughter.

"Oh, Jen!" her master would reply with equal carelessness; "Jen's on fit—muckle aboot it, I judge. At least I heard her telling the mistress she was to get ready the pots for the berry-jeely boiling the morn!"

There were bells in the house of Airieland, for the place was a lairdship. But I never heard one rung in the way of service. Even when there was "company" the leddy would come out of the parlour or "room" (meaning dining-room) and call "Jen!" from the head of the stairs. That was her bell.

The Ringing of the Bell.

What would have happened had Jen been rung for I shudder to think. But she never was. That is, except by me. Prowling one day in a top room among old lumber, I pulled a cord of green. Then in the awful silence which followed I heard my aunt's voice far down in the great empty belly of the house denouncing vengeance. I knew better than to meet half-way her desire for an immediate interview. So I ensconced myself in a musty cupboard and waited. The threatenings and thunders waxed nearer. The door of the garret flew open.

"Na, but—gin I get haud o' that loon, I'll break every bane in his peeferin' ill-set body—frichtin' fowk oot o' their seeven senses, an' braingin' at a bell that hasna been poo'ed to my knowledge for thretty year! Come oot o' that—ye think I dinna see ye! But I ken whaur ye are. Come oot when I bid ye!"

But I had better judgment than to stir, being well aware that if Jen had known my whereabouts she would long ago have had me by the collar, and in the posture of immediate penance. So I held my breath till she retreated. Then, reaching cautiously for some old tracts in the cupboard bottom, I came on a precious bundle of old chapman's ballads and folk-lore tales—Geordie Buchanan's jests and other edifying matter among them. By tea-time all had been forgotten (if not forgiven), and I only got my customary cuff in the bygoing, to pay for the unknown iniquities which Jen was always certain I had been committing.

There was a room among the bedrooms in the second floor which had for me the most sinister fascination. I judge now that I must have dreamed the whole story. But it was dread-

fully real to me then. A murder had been committed there, so I told myself. In some terrible vision I had been witness of the event. It had been called the Yellow Room, but they relaid it with blue carpet and put blue paper on the walls—to hide the blood stains! I remember still taking up some tacks on the sly and looking under the carpet. The blood was there all right—or, at least, something that looked like it.

The Mystery of the Yellow Room.

A GALLOWAY FARMYARD

I sounded for trap-doors. I considered the chances of rope-ladders from the window. I even tried to screw my head up the chimney. But the mystery was a mystery still—and indeed remains so. Yet I knew clearly enough who it was that had been murdered. She (it was a she) was the daughter of a former laird of Airieland, and she had been murdered by her schoolmaster or resident tutor. I did not admire schoolmasters about that time. I had my reasons. Moreover I was perfectly certain of the identity of the culprit, and if only I could have

brought him to justice—my, what a time we schoolboys would have had!

The fact that I was perfectly aware that the murdered lady dwelt in the town of Newmilns, and continued to occupy herself with beekeeping and the cares of a large family, in no way detracted from the mysterious nature of the occurrence in the Yellow Room. At least I had good evidence that a schoolmaster, like Habakkuk, is capable of anything.

The main difference between Airieland and my other childhood's homes was, however, that I had within reach the society of other children of my age. True, within the Big House itself, I was lonesome as ever—whence, perhaps, proceeded the mystery of the Yellow Chamber.

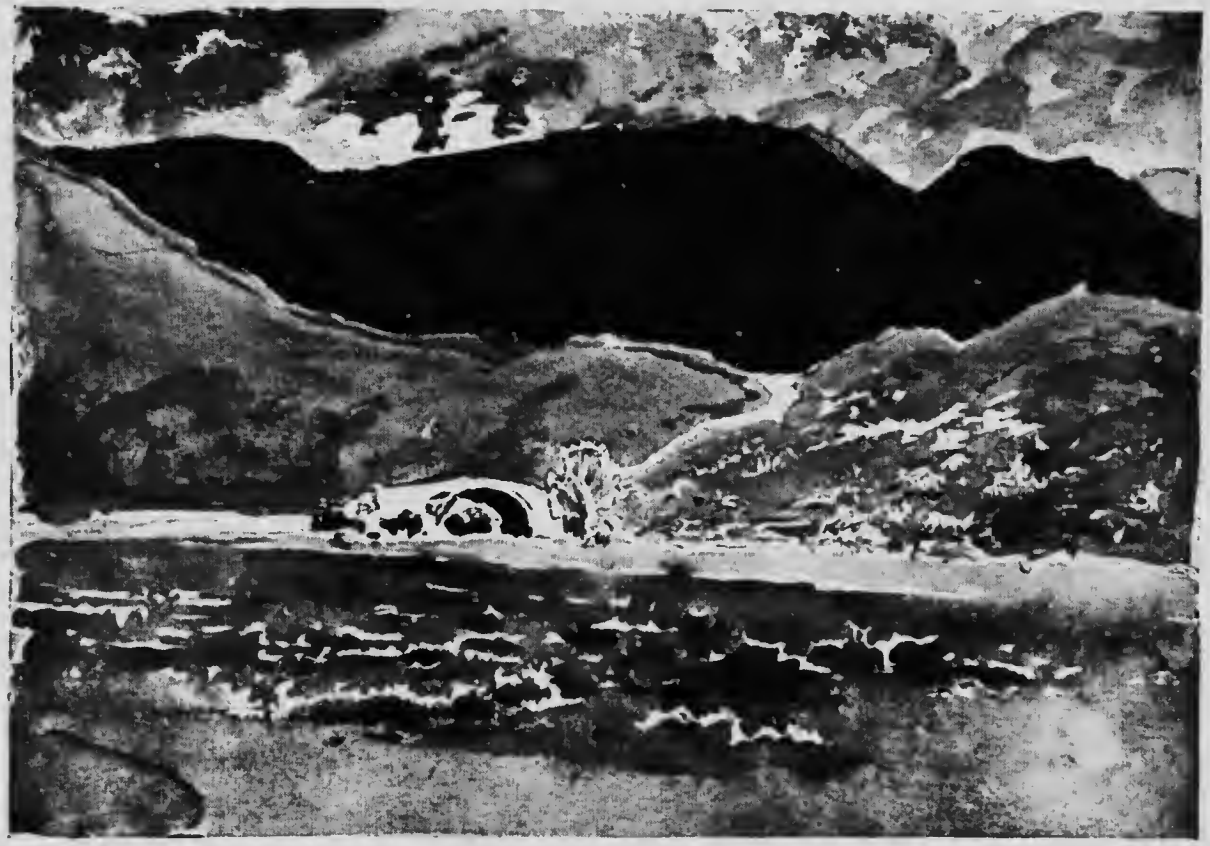
But let me but cross over a stile, dive under an archway, and there, opening out before me, was the old farm town of Airieland, now turned into a big dairy, and merry all day long with the sound of children's voices.

Other children, though hardly of our world, dwelt in the whitewashed row of cothouses away up by the mill-dam. But we confined ourselves mostly to the wooden lade that fetched the water to the big mill-wheel at the back of the barn, and to the shadowy edges of the orchard. Here we climbed trees and sailed boats of bark and chip all through the long hot summer of 1868.

Beyond the cothouses and the mill-dam rose a hill of dark heather with the laird's new plantations fringing every watercourse, and sending scouting parties up among the grey Silurian rocks.

The Plantation on Fire.

Well do I mind me of one awful Sunday, when for our sins the heather caught fire. We had been arranging whin tops, bits of stick and heather roots to roast wild-fowl eggs upon. There was a stiff breeze blowing from the east, and of course the muir-burn went off at top speed. The water still beads my brow when I think of the dread despair of that first half-paralysed moment, and the frenzied "Off wi' your jackets, boys!" with which we sprang to the task of getting it under control.



IN THE RAIDERS' COUNTRY

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My bitterest pang was that I knew well that it was a judgment upon the sin of Sabbath-breaking. I had on my Sunday coat—and—I knew what I would get. Nevertheless, to do us justice, the thought that the laird would know we had burned his plantation was more than all chastenings, past, present, or to come. At all costs the fire must be put out. If it reached the plantation, no man of us doubted for a moment that we would instantly be had out for execution on the gravel in front of the big house.

Well, the fire was put out, and our parents and guardians entered duly into judgment with us for the state of our Sunday clothes. But what cared we? We had set the heather on fire on Airieland Hill when the wind blew towards the plantations—and lived to tell the tale. That was glory enough for half-a-dozen eight-year olds.

But the event had a distinct moral effect upon me. When I went out to the hill after that upon the First Day of the week, I was careful to put on my everyday clothes.

The very fact that at Airieland I was one among other "loons"—none of the highest reputation (and one tom-boy of a girl among us)—held me aloof from the work of the farm. I might help to bring home the sixty cows, with hootings and runnings and mighty "henching" of stones. But nothing more was allowed us.

At home I was used to make the "bands" for my mother in the harvest field. At Drumbreck I carried the tea afield to the haymakers between three and four of the afternoon—and shared the same lying prone upon the nearest hay-cock, two bare legs waving in the breeze.

The Wonders of Airieland.

But at Airieland we viewed the reapers from afar off, and listened to the loud *g-r-r-r-r* of their machinery, then heard for the first time, with a kind of awe. There was devilry abroad, we felt, and the driving of the "reaper" served to gild a certain athletic uncle of mine with a kind of infernal glory.

Beyond the march dyke again there stretched away the

massive slopes of Ben Gairn, the most universally prominent hill in Galloway, all deep purple heather right to the summit, from which on clear days we could see the Solway, the white sails of ships, and certain blowing feathers of smoke, which meant England.

Up to that time I had never seen any water greater than the narrow loch on the shores of which I was born. But when I looked down from Ben Gairn upon the sea, I thought within me that anything less like water I had never seen in my life. It seemed for all the world like a barn floor, as flat and as dry.

An old well to fall down, a mill-dam to skip stones upon, a burn to get wet in, an avenue with slaty shale rubbish to cut your fingers with—these were the other marvels of Airieland thirty years ago. And above all there was the sweetest and most gracious of "leddies," who, after her work was done, would often say, "Weel, laddie, how mony birds' nests hae ye fand the day?" And forthwith, her hand in mine, and her head nodding pleasantly as its manner was, she would trot me off to examine the robin's nest in the bank hole, the starling's in the hole of the beech tree, and the mavis' in the gooseberry bush, as much of a child as I.

God give her good rest! For of such (and they are few) is the salt of the earth. She lived to a good old age, to see her children's children's children growing up about her knee.

IV.—THE FARM IN RAIDERLAND

Glenhead of Trool

Glenhead I saw for the first time in the broad glare of a mid-noon sun. All the valley swam in a hazy blue mist, and the heat smote down from the white lift as through the glass of a hothouse.

Glenhead in Minigaff.

Yet I have been in Glenhead during those winter days when for six weeks the sun does not touch its highest chimney-top, so deep the little granite house sits under

the giant hills about it—Bennanbrack, Curlywee, Lamachan, and its own Gairy shouldering up close behind it.

Differing from all the other farms, at Glenhead everything is "black-faced sheep." Their ways, their care, their difficulties from season to season, their strange simplicity, their yet stranger outbreaks of unexpected wisdom—the latter chiefly among the ladies of the flock, those mothers in Israel, "snaw-breakers" by name, who

A Land of Sheep.

LOOKING HILLWARD NEAR NEWTON-STEWART

charge some stubborn snow-wreath, and so lead out their juniors to safety, and new if scanty pastures.

Especially in "lambing-time" all here gives way to "the yowes." The ailments of a mere human are nothing to those of a ewe "fa'en aval." The mistress herself establishes hospitals and orphanages, and becomes at once house-surgeon, hospital dresser, and an entire staff of nurses.

Beneath the house are winding ribbons of meadow grass following the meanderings of a stream. Enclosed by a wall behind you will find a "park" or two. A tennis-lawn of corn waves green in the hollow, a forenoon's work to cut for an able-bodied man. Beneath remote Clashdaan, away on the shores

of Loch Dee, you will find another triangle of meadow grass, the produce carefully ricked and carried up beyond floodmark. Then behind these the farm rolls back mile after mile. The number of its acres none knows to a hundred or so, all hills of sheep—nothing but black-faced sheep, unless you may count a random fox marauding from Bennanbrack, or a rabbit cocking his white fud over a brae.

Heather and rock, loch and lochan, islet and bare granite peak! So it goes on mile after mile, growing ever more and more lonely and remote, till above Utmost Enoch you look out upon a land like that where never man comes

"Nor hath come, since the making of the world."

This is the true Raiders' Country. Yet even from Glenhead you must go six long Scots miles to set your eyes on Enoch and the Dungeon of Buchan, to look down the great chasm swimming with vapour, and see the three Lochs of the Dungeon lie like pale steel puddles far beneath, with the green and treacherous links of the Cooran winding past them through the morass.

A Far Cry to Loch Enoch.

It is indeed a far cry! But on the way you will pass Cameron's Grave—not him of Ayr's Moss, the Lion of the Covenant, but a simpler wayfarer—packman or what not, gone astray in the storm and found dead by the shepherds in that still and lonely place.

But I will tell further of these things when we take pilgrim staff and invade the last Fastnesses of Hector Faa in the wake of Patrick Heron and May Mischief. It is of the farm that I would speak, and, in a single word, of the good folk who dwell therein.

"Dwell,"—aye, there is the difference. At my other typical farms all is changed. Scarce stands the very stone and lime where it did.

But at Glenhead these my dear and worthy friends still hold the door open and cast the eyes of contented happiness upon the beautiful things about them. May their meal-ark be ever full to the brim—from their baulks may the bacon flitch depend,

and the ham of yet more delicious mutton. Oaten farles—I think of you and my teeth water—not cakes of Paradise so toothsome to men coming in sharpset off the muir. The God of the hills, to which you have so long time lifted your eyes, be your ward and your rereward. John M'Millan and Marion his wife, I, unforgetting, send you this greeting across mountains and seas and the remorseless lapse of years.

THE SHORE ROAD TO CREETOWN

CHAPTER III

THE RAIDERS' COUNTRY

I.—WHY WE ARE WHAT WE ARE

BETWEEN Dee and Cree—that is our Galloway. A link of Forth were almost worth it all. The uninstructed conceives of Galloway as but a parish somewhere in broad Scotland. To the native it is—as its wild Picts were in the national line of battle—the very van-guard of empire.

Between Dee and Cree.

When we meet each other far over seas, or even in such outlandish parts as Edinburgh, to be of Galloway warms our hearts to one another, and not unfrequently, perhaps, uncorks the "greybeard." But when we of one part of that wide province meet one another down in Galloway itself we are a little apt to walk round each other, and growl and snarl like angry stranger curs at one another's heels. For to the man

from the Rhynns, the man from the East Side that looks on Nith is but a border thief. And with regard to a man from Dumfries itself, the question is not whether any good can come out of such a Nazareth, but rather whether any evil can come out of anywhere else.

However, we are forgetting Ayrshire. To belong to Dumfries is indeed a crime in the eyes of every true son of the ancient and independent province. But yet there is a kind of pity attached to the ignoble fact, as for men who would have helped the matter if they had been consulted in time, but who now have to face the fault of their parents as best they may.

Enemy's Country.

The case is, however, entirely different with an Ayrshireman. He is an Ayrshireman by intent. For him there can be no excuse. For his villainy no palliation. Is there not in the records of Scottish law a well-authenticated case in which one Mossman was hanged on May 20, 1785, upon the following indictment :—

1. That the prisoner was found on the king's highway without cause.

2. That he "wandered in his discoorse."

3. "*That he belonged to Carrick.*"

The last count was proven and was fatal to him. And with good reason. Many an honester man has been hanged for less.

I remember a very intelligent old native of Kirkcudbright telling me that the reception of Burns's poems in Galloway was much retarded by the prejudice against an Ayrshireman, and was indeed never completely overcome during the poet's lifetime.

Other parts of the country were little regarded by the true sons of Stewartry and Shire. There were known to be such districts as "Lanerickshire and the wild Heelants," but they were ill thought of. People who said that they had been there were looked on "a thocht agley," as we might look at one who, with no record for conspicuous daring, asserted that

The Rest of the World.

he had been to the summit of Mount Everest. Accounts of their travels were received with conspicuous and almost insulting unbelief. "Oh, ye hae been in the Heelants, say ye?" "Ow, aye,—*umpha*—aye!"

Edinburgh was known, of course. It was a bad place, Edinburgh. A Gallowayman only went there once. The place he visited was the Grassmarket, where the king's representative presented him with the loan of a long tow-rope for half-an-hour.

So that though most of the Galloway lairds of any degree of respectability in the olden times had had their little bit of trouble in the days before the Union, most of them preferred to be "put to the horn" (that is, proclaimed rebel and traitor to the realm and the king's majesty by three blasts upon the horn at the Cross of Edinburgh), rather than come up and risk getting their necks mixed up with the "King's tow."

It was a very far cry to Cruggleton and a farther to the Dungeon of Buchan, and the region of Galloway was not healthy for king's messengers. The enteric disease called "six inch o' cauld steel in the wame o' him" was extraordinarily prevalent in the district, and any one who was known to carry the king's writ or warrant about his person was almost certain to suffer from it.

It was told of Kennedy of Bargany that on one occasion his man John had cruelly assaulted an innocent traveller upon the highway, and was brought before the Sheriff Court at Wigton for the offence. Bargany appeared to defend his man, and his plea of innocence on behalf of John was that the man assaulted "lookit like a Sheriff's offisher or a lawvyer." John got off.

"Omnis Gallia."

All Galloway is divided into three parts—the Stewartry, the Shire, and the parish of Balmaghie. Some have tried to do without the latter division, but their very ill-success has proved their error. The parish of Balmaghie is the *Cor Cordium* of Galloway. It is the central parish—the citadel of Gallovidian prejudices. It was the proud sanctuary of the reivers of the low country

before the Reformation. Then it became the headquarters of the High Westland Whigs in the stirring times that sent Davie Crookback to watch the king's forces on the English border. From its Clachanpluck every single man marched away to Rullion Green, very few returning from the dowsing they got on Pentland side from grim long-bearded Dalyell. It was the parish that for many years defied, indiscriminately, law courts and Church courts, and kept Macmillan, the first minister of the Cameronian Societies, in enjoyment of kirk, glebe, and manse in spite of the invasion of the emissaries of Court of Session and the fulminations of the Erastian Presbytery of Kirkcudbright.

Balmaghie was a great place for religious excitement in the old days—though, as one of the historians of the county says, it is remarkable with what calmness the people of Balmaghie have taken the matter since.

The adjoining parts of Galloway—the Stewartry and the Shire—are important enough in their way. They cannot all be Balmaghies, but they do very well. The Stewartry was in ancient time the more important of these two larger divisions. Its rental and taxable value were to the Shire in the proportion of nine to five.

But, strangely enough, it was not proud of the fact, and has often since tried to get the valuation reduced. This shows how little conceit of themselves Stewartry men have. If you want to see real conceit you must go to the neighbourhood of Glenluce, and ask who makes the best bee-skeps in Scotland.

The Eighteenth Century in Galloway.

Now a word as to time. The eighteenth century did not begin in 1701 according to the received opinion. It really began with William of Orange coming over from Holland in the year of the "glorious revolution," and settling the country down into that smug respectability which for a good while played havoc with the old picturesque interest. Yet in Galloway there always remained elements of special interest, owing to the remote and independent nature of the country.

On the other hand, it was Walter Scott who put an end to the eighteenth century. The Waverley Novels were a great civiliser, and by making the old world the world of literature, Scott convinced people in Scotland that they were living in modern times—for many had lived contentedly all their lives and never known it. They were as surprised to hear it as M. Jourdain was when he found out that for a long season he had been talking prose.

"Guy Mannering" was the instrument by which Scott cultivated Galloway out of the eighteenth century. Yet the local colour of the book is slight, and to a born Gallovidian hardly recognisable. For Scott did not know Galloway. He got Galloway legends from Joseph Train, that careful and most excellent literary jackal; but he dressed them up in the attire of Ettrick Forest. He thinks, for instance, that the hills of Galloway are smooth, green-breasted swells, like Eildon or Tinto; and there is nothing to show that he even suspected what fastnesses lie hid from the ken of the ordinary romancer and topographer about the Dungeon of Buchan and Loch Enoch.

So in this wide field of the eighteenth century it is not easy to give a general idea of how the people of the double province lived. There was indeed a great advance in all the comforts of living in Galloway during the eighteenth century—though not so great, perhaps, as during the nineteenth.

The Old Names.

The ancient gentry of Galloway, of true Galloway blood, were never a very numerous race, and some of the greatest names were extinct long before the eighteenth century. The Douglasses, of course, the greatest of all, had had neither art or part in Galloway since the fifteenth century. The great house of the Kennedies of Cassilis had retired upon Ayrshire. Gone were the days when

> "Frae Wigton to the toun o' Ayr,
> An' laigh doon by the cruives o' Cree,
> Nae man may howp a lodging there
> Unless he coort wi' Kennedy."

But in the eighteenth century there were still Agnews in Lochnaw as there are to this day, Stewarts in Garlies, MacDowalls in Garthland, M'Kies in Myrtoun and in

THE RAIDERS' BRIDGE

Barrower, Maxwells in Mochrum and Monreith, and of course there were the great politicians of the time—the Dalrymples of Stair in the old Cassilis stronghold of Castle Kennedy.

In the upper Stewartry the well-known names were those of the Gordons of Lochinvar and Kenmure—of Earlstoun, and of Culvennan. On the Dumfries Marches the Maxwells held

sway, and the Murrays of Broughton were rapidly acquiring land in the south.

The baronage were mostly content to live quietly on their estates in a kind of "bien" hospitality and good-fellowship. One of the big houses could account for a sheep a week, besides many pigs and an odd "nowt beast" or two in the "back end." But even in the great houses porridge and milk and homely oatcake were still the commonest of fare. We find, for instance, a Galloway soldier of Marlborough's mourning in a far land that in these outlandish parts they had neither "farle of cake," nor yet a "girdle" to bake it on. The great houses were mostly defer[illegible], and such were the exigencies of the time that sieges were not unknown—the gipsies and outlaw clans of the hills making no scruple to come down, "boding in fear of weir," and to assault any man's house against whom they had a grudge.

The position of many of these Galloway gentry was little different from that of a feudal baron. In the seventeenth century two and three "merklands" were still granted to likely young fellows who would settle down on the estates of a knight, under pledge to be his men and breed lusty loons to wear the leathern jack, and ride behind him when he went to leave his card on a brother baron with whom he might have a difference. This, says Sir Andrew Agnew of Lochnaw, in his excellent "Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway," is the origin of the phrase—

"Ye are but a bow o' meal-Gordon."

This was a telling sarcasm against undue pretensions to pedigree, based on a tradition that a Gordon of Lochinvar and Kenmure, anxious to increase his vassalage, gave any likely-looking young fellow willing to take his name at least three acres and a cow—together with a boll of meal yearly. From which it will be seen that the supposed Radical innovation of "three acres and a cow," used as a bribe, was really feudal in origin, and began, as many wise and good things did, in the province of Galloway.

Still this was a better custom than the charge which is enshrined in another Galloway story: "*Ye gat the price o' it where the Ayrshireman gat the coo.*" The admirable Trotter has the story thus: "There was a queer craitur that they caa Tam Rabinson leeved at Wigton, and he had a kind o' weakness; but he had some clever sayings for all that. Also, like most Gallowaymen, he disliked the Ayrshiremen for what he considered their meanness and their undoubted habit of taking people's farms over their heads. One day Tam found a very big mushroom, and was taking it home to his mother. So when he came to the corner end, a lot of men were standing about, and a big Ayrshire dealer of the name of Cochrane among them that had the habit of tormenting Tam, and trying to make a fool of him. Seeing Tam with the big mushroom, Cochrane cried out:

"'Hullo, Tammock, what did you pay for the new bannet?'

"'The same price that the Ayrshireman payed for the coo,' says Tam.

"'An' what did he pay for the coo?' asks Cochrane.

"'Oh, naething!' says Tam, '*he juist fand it in a field!*'"

Which was a saying exceedingly hard for an Ayrshireman and a cattle-dealer to stomach.

The bonnet lairds were a well-known class in Galloway, and were mostly the sternest and most unbending of Whigs. They were reared exactly like the ordinary farmers, but their farms belonged to themselves, though a certain service was given to some of the great barons in return for steadfast protection. Some of these rose to considerable honour. For instance, there was Grierson of Bargatton, in Balmaghie, who on more than one occasion was returned to Parliament as one of the representatives of the Stewartry.

The Bonnet Lairds.

The bonnet lairds lived much as the better farmers did, but in some things they stood aloof. For one thing, they locked their doors at night, which no farmer body was said to do in all Galloway during the eighteenth century. They lived in the summer time and in the winter alike on porridge

and milk, flavoured with occasional fries of ham from the fat "gussie" that had run about the doors the year before. Sometimes they salted down a "mart" for the winter, and there was generally a ham or two of "braxy" sheep hanging to the joists. Puddings, both white and black, were supposed to be an article of dainty fare.

Sometimes the country folk did not wait till the unfortunate animal was dead in order to provide entertainment for their guests.

"Saunders, rin, man, and blood the soo—here's the minister gettin' ower the dyke!" was the exclamation of a Galloway goodwife on the occasion of a ministerial visitation.

It is told of the famous Seceder minister, Walter Dunlop, of Dumfries, that he too loved good entertainment when he went out on his parochial visitations.

Specially he liked a "tousy tea"—that is, one with trimmings.

On one occasion he had to baptize a bairn in a certain house, and there they offered him his tea—a plain tea—before he began.

This was not at all to Walter's liking. He had other ideas, after walking so far over the heather.

"Na, na, guidwife," he said, "I'll do my work first—edification afore gustation. Juist pit ye on the pan, an' when I hear the ham skirling, I'll ken it's time to draw to a conclusion."

"But and Ben" with the Cow.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the common people of Galloway lived in the utmost simplicity—if it be simplicity to live but and ben with the cow. In many of the smaller houses there was no division between the part of the dwelling used for the family and that occupied by Crummie the cow, and Gussie the pig.

But things rapidly improved, and by 1750 there was hardly such a dwelling to be found in the eastern part of Galloway. The windows in a house of this class were usually two in number and wholly without glass. They were stopped up with a wooden board according to the direction from

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To face p. 54

which the wind blew. The smoke hung in dense masses about the roof of the "auld clay biggin'," and, in lieu of a chimney, found its way occasionally out at the door. But many of the people who lived in these little houses fared surprisingly well. The sons were "braw lads" and the daughters "sonsy queans." They could dress well upon occasion, and we are told in wonder by a southern visitant that it is no uncommon thing to see a perfectly well-dressed man in a good plaid or cloak come out of a hovel like an outhouse.

"The clartier the cosier" was, we fear, a Galloway maxim which was held in good repute even in the earlier part of the eighteenth century among a considerable section of the common folk.

Later, however, the small farmers became exceedingly particular both as to cleanliness in food and attention to their persons. We saw recently the dress worn to kirk and market by a Galloway small farmer about 1790. It consisted of a broad blue Kilmarnock bonnet, checked at the brim with red and white; a blue coat of rough woollen, cut like a dress-coat of to-day, save that it was made to button with large silver buttons; a red velvet waistcoat, with long flaps in front; corded knee-breeches, *rig-and-fur* stockings, and buckled shoes completed the attire of the douce and sonsy Cameronian farmer when he went a-wooing in his own sober, determined, and, no doubt, ultimately successful way.

I have yet to speak of the "ministry of the Word" and of the state of religion. Things were not very bright in Galloway at the beginning of the eighteenth century. We hear, for instance, of a majority of a local Presbytery being under such *famas* that the Synod had to take the matter up; and in several of the parishes of Galloway the manse was by no means a centre of light and good example.

Galloway Ministry.

This was perhaps owing to the state of the country after the Killing Time and the Revolution. Many of the people of Galloway would not for long accept the ministrations of the

regular parish clergy, who were ready to hold fellowship with "malignants." The Society men, Cameronian and other, held aloof, and though, till the sentence of deposition was pronounced against Mr. Macmillan of Balmaghie, they had no regular ministry, their numbers were very considerable, and their influence greater still. They knew themselves to be the salt of the earth, and we remember that even thirty-five years ago the Cameronians of the remoter parts of Galloway held themselves a little apart in a stiff kind of spiritual independence and even pride, to which the other denominations looked up, not without a certain awe and respect.

The Cameronians.

But the effect on the Cameronian boy was not always so happy. We were in danger of becoming little prigs. Whenever we met a boy belonging to the Established Kirk (who learned paraphrases), we threw a stone at him to bring him to a sense of his position. If, as Homer says, *he* was a lassie, we put out our tongue at her.

But it is a more interesting thing to inquire concerning the state of religion among the people than into the efficiency of the clergy. In many of the best families, and these too often the poorest, religion was instilled in a very high, noble, and practical way indeed. Such a house as that of William Burness, described in the "Cotter's Saturday Night," was a type of many Galloway homes of last century.

Religion among the People.

Prayers night and morn were a certainty, however early the field work might be begun, and however late the workers were in getting home. On the Sabbath morn especially the sound of praise went up from every cothouse. In the farm kitchens the whole family and dependants were gathered together to be instructed in religion.

The "Caratches" were repeated round the circle, and grandmother in the corner and lisping babe each took their turn, nor thought it any hardship.

The minister expressed national characteristics excellently well. But even he of the Cameronian Kirk was to some

extent affected by the tone of learning in the university towns where he had attended the college, and "gotten lear" and "understanding of the original tongues." But in the sterling qualities of many an old Galloway farmer (who, perhaps, never had fifty pounds clear in a year in his life, and whose whole existence was one of bitter struggle with the hardest conditions) we get some understanding of how the religion of our country, so stern and tender, so tempest-tossed and so victorious, stood the strains of persecution and the frosts of the succeeding century of unbelief. In the darkest times of indifference there were, at least in Scotland, many more than seven thousand who never bowed the knee to Baal, and whose mouths had never kissed him—though, so far as Galloway is concerned, let it not be forgotten that even this comes with a qualification, like all things merely human. For it is of the nature of Galloway to share with Providence the credit of any victory, but to charge it wholly with all disasters. "Wasna that cleverly dune?" we say when we succeed. "We maun juist submit!" we say when we fail. A most comfortable theology, which is ever the one for the most of Galloway folk, whom "chiefly dourness and not fanaticism took to the hills when Lag came riding with his mandates and letters judicatory."

II.—WHAT WE SEE IN RAIDERLAND

The hills of Galloway lie across the crystal Cree as one rides northward towards Glen Trool, much as the Lebanon lies above the sweltering plains north of Galilee; a land of promise, cool grey in the shadows, palest olive and blue in the lights. By chance it is a day of sweltering heat, and as we go up the great glen of Trool the midday sunshine is almost more than Syrian.

The firs' shadows in the woods fringing the loch about Eschonquhan are deliciously cool as the swift cycle drives among them. We get but fleeting glimpses of the water till we come out on the rocky cliff shelf, which we follow all

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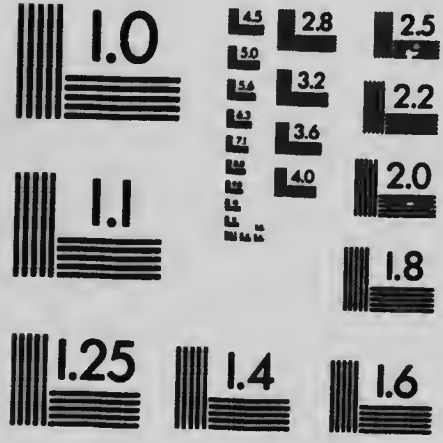

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the way to the farmhouse of Buchan. Trool lies much like a Perthshire loch, set between the granite and the blue-stone—the whin being upon the southern and the granite upon the northern side. The firs, which clothe the slopes and cluster thick about the shores, give it a beautiful and even cultivated appearance. It has a look more akin to the dwellings of men, and that aggregation of individuals which we call the world. Yet what is gained in beauty is more than lost in the characteristic note of untouched solitude which is the rarest pleasure of him who recognises that God made Galloway.

Loch Trool.

Trool is somehow of a newer creation, and the regularity of its pines tells us that it owes much to the hand of man. Loch Enoch, on the other hand, is plainly and wholly of God, sculptured by His tempests, its rocks planed down to the quick by the ancientest glaciers of "The Galloway Cauldron."

The road gradients along Trool-side are steep as the roof of a house. From more than one point on the road the loch lies beneath us so close that it seems as if we could toss a biscuit upon its placid breast. The deep narrow glen may be flooded with intense and almost Italian sunshine. But the water lies cool, solid, and intensely indigo at the bottom. Far up the defile we can see Glenhead, lying snug among its trees, with the sleeping giants of the central hills set thick about it. Nor it is not long till, passing rushing burns and heathery slopes on our way, we reach it.

Heartsome content within, placid stillness without as we ride up—a broad straw hat lying in a friendly way upon the path—the clamour of children's voices somewhere down by the meadow—a couple of dogs that welcome us with a chorus of belated barking—this is Glenhead, a pleasant place for the wandering vagabond to set his foot upon and rest awhile. Then after a time, out of the coolness of the narrow latticed sitting-room (where there is such a collection of good books as makes us think of the nights of winter when the storms rage about the hill-cinctured farm), we step, lightly following, with many expectations, the slow, calm, steady shepherd's stride of

our friend—the master of all these fastnesses—as he paces upwards to guide us over his beloved hills.

It is warm work as we climb. The sun is yet in his strength, and he does not spare us. Like Falstaff, a fatter but not a better-tempered man, we lard the lean earth as we walk along. But the worst is already overpast when we have breasted the long incline, and find beneath us the still blue circles of the twin lochs of Glenhead. Before we reach the first crest, we pass beneath a great granite boulder, concerning which we are told a remarkable story. One day in autumn, some years ago, a herd boy came running into the farmhouse crying that the day of judgment had come—or words to that effect. He had heard a great rush of rocks down from the overhanging brow of the crag-embattled precipice above. One great grey stone, huge as a cothouse, had been started by the heavy rains, and was coming downwards, bringing others along with it, with a noise like a live avalanche. The master saw it come, and doubtless a thought for the security of his little homestead crossed his mind. At the least he expected the rock to crash downward to the great dyke which protects his cornfields in the hollow. But the mass sank three or four feet in the soft turf of a "brow," and there to this day it remains embedded. A manifest providence! And the folk still acknowledge Providence among these hills—so behindhand are they!

The Hill Fastnesses.

As we mount, we leave away to the south the green, sheep-studded, sun-flecked side of Curleywee. The name is surely one which is given to its whaup-haunted solitudes, because of that most characteristic of moorland sounds—the wailing pipe of the curlew. "Curleywee—Curleywee—Curleywee." That is exactly what the whaups say in their airy moorland diminuendo, as with a curve like their own Roman noses they sink downward into the bogs.

Waterfalls are gleaming in the clefts—"jaws of water," as the hill folks call them—the distant sound coming to us pleasant and cool, for we begin to desire great water-draughts, climbing upwards in the fervent heat. But our guide knows

every spring of water on the hillside, as well as every rock that has sheltered fox or eagle. There, on the face of that cliff, is the apparently very accessible eyrie where nested the last of the Eagles of the southern uplands. Year after year they built up there, protected by the enlightened tenants of Glenhead, who did not grudge a stray dead lamb, in order that the noble bird might dwell in his ancient fastnesses and possess his soul—for surely so noble a bird has a soul—in peace. As a reward for his hospitality, our guide keeps a better understanding of that great Isaian text, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles," than he could obtain from any sermon or commentary in the round world. For has he not seen the great bird strike a grouse on the wing, recover itself from the blow, then, stooping earthwards, catch the dead bird before it had time to fall to the ground? Also he has seen the pair floating far up in the blue, twin specks against the supreme azure. Generally only one of the young was reared to eaglehood, though sometimes there might be two. But on every occasion the old ones beat off their offspring as soon as these could fly, and compelled their children to seek pastures new. Some years ago, however—in the later seventies—the eagles left Glenhead and removed to a more inaccessible rock-crevice upon the rocky side of the Back Hill o' Buchan. But not for long. Disturbed in his ancient seat, though his friends had done all in their power to protect him, he finally withdrew himself. His mate was shot by some ignorant scoundrel prowling with a gun, somewhere over in the neighbourhood of Loch Doon. We have no doubt that the carcass is the proud possession of some local collector, to whom, as well as to the original "gunning idiot," we would gladly present, at our own expense, tight-fitting suits of tar and feather.

Behind us, as we rise upwards into the realms of blue, are the heights of Lamachan and Bennanbrack. Past the side of Curleywee it is possible to look into the great chasm of air in which, unseen and far beneath us, lies Loch Dee.

We gain the top of the high boulder-strewn ridge. Fantastic shapes, carved out of the gleaming grey granite, are all

about. Those on the ridges against the sky look for all the world like polar-bears with their long lean noses thrust

NEAR MURRAY'S MONUMENT

forward to scent the seals on the floes or the salmon running up the Arctic rapids to spawn. To our right, above Loch Valley, is a boulder which is so poised that it constitutes a "logan" or rocking-stone. It is so delicately set as to be moved by the blowing of the wind.

Loch Valley and Loch Neldricken form, with the twin lochs of Glenhead, a water system of their own, connected with Glen Trool by the rapid torrential burn called the Gairlin, that flashes downward through the narrow ravine which we leave behind us to our left as we go upward. At the beginning of the burn, where it escapes from Loch Valley, are to be seen the remains of a weir which was erected in order to raise artificially the level of the loch, submerging in the process most of the shining beaches of silver granite sand. But the loch was too strong for the puny works of man. One fine day, warm and sunny, our guide tells us that he was working with his sheep high up on the hill, when the roar and rattle of great stones carried along by the water brought him down the "screes" at a run. Loch Valley had broken loose. The weir was no more, and the Gairlin burn was coming down in a ten-foot breast, creamy foam cresting it like an ocean wave. Down the glen it went like a miniature Johnstown disaster, while the boulders crashed and ground together with the rush of the water. When Loch Valley was again seen, it had resumed its pristine aspect—that which it had worn since the viscous granite paste finished oozing out in sheets from the great cracks in the Silurian rocks, and the glaciers had done their work of grinding down its spurs and outliers. It takes a Napoleon of engineering to fool with Loch Valley.

The Land of the Lochs.

From this point we keep to the right, passing the huge moraine which guards the end of the loch and effectually prevents a still greater flood than that which our master shepherd witnessed. These mounds are full of what are called in the neighbourhood "jingling stones." Without doubt they consist of sand and shingle, so riddled with great boulders that the crevices within are constantly being filled up and forming anew as the sand shifts and sifts among the stones. As we proceed the sun is shining over the shoulder of the Merrick, and we are bound to hasten, for there is yet far to go. Neldricken and Valley are wide-spreading moun-

tain lakes, lying deep among the hills which spread nearly twenty miles in every direction. The sides of the glens are seared with the downward rush of many waters. Waterspouts are common on these great hills. It is no uncommon thing for the level of a moorland burn to be raised six or ten feet in the course of a few minutes. A "Skyreburn" warning is proverbial in the south country along Solwayside. But the Mid Burn, and those which strike north from Loch Enoch tableland, hardly even give a man time to step across their normal noisy brattle till they are roaring red and it is twenty or thirty feet from bank to bank.

These big boulders, heaped up on one another, often make most evil traps for sheep to fall into. Sometimes it needs crowbars and the strength of men to extricate those that happen to be caught there. The dogs that range the hills, questing after white hares and red foxes, are quick to scent out these poor prisoners. These prison-houses are named "yirds" by the shepherds. They are especially numerous on the Hill of Glenhead, at a place called Jartness, which overlooks Loch Valley. And indeed it is difficult anywhere to see a more leg-breaking place. It will compare even with that paragon of desolation, the Back Hill o' Buchan. It is understood in the district that when the Great Architect looked upon His handicraft and found it very good, He made a mental reservation in the case of the "Back Hill o' Buchan."

But our eyes are upwards. Loch Enoch is the goal of our desire. For nights past we have dreamed of its lonely fastnesses. Now they are immediately before us.

Utmost Enoch.

Enoch is literally a lake in cloudland. Overhead frowns what might be the mural fortification of some titanic Mount Valerien or Ehrenbreitstein. The solemn battlemented lines rise above us so high that they are only dominated by the great mass of the Merrick. It is hard to believe that a cliff so abrupt and stately has a lake on its summit. Yet it is so. The fortress-like breastwork falls away in a huge embrasure on either side, and it is into the trough which lies nearest the Merrick that we direct our steps. As

we go we fall talking of strange sights seen on the hills. Our guide, striding before, stalwart and strong, flings pearls of information over his shoulder as he goes, and to the steady stream of talk the foot moves lighter over the heather. Beneath us we have now a strange sight—in a manner the most wonderful thing we have yet seen. On the edge of Loch Neldricken lies a mass of green and matted reeds—brilliantly emerald, with the deceitful brilliancy of a "quakin' qua," or shaking bog, of bottomless black mud. In the centre of this green bed is a perfectly-defined circle of intensely black water, as exact as though cut with a compass. It is the Murder Hole, of gloomy memory. Here, says the man of the hill, is a very strong spring which does not freeze in the hardest winters, yet is avoided by man and beast. It is certain that if this gloomy Avernus were given the gift of narration it would tell of lost men on the hills, forwandered and drowned in its dark depths.

The Merrick begins to tower above us with its solemn head as we thread our way upward towards the plateau on which Loch Enoch lies. We are so high now that we can see backward over the whole region of Trool and the Loch Valley basin. Behind us, on the extreme south, connected with the ridge of the Merrick, is Buchan Hill, the farmhouse of which lies low down by the side of Loch Trool. Across a wilderness of tangled ridge-boulder and morass is the Long Hill of the Dungeon, depressed to the south into the "Wolf's Slock"—or throat. Now our Loch Enoch fortress is almost stormed. Step by step we have been rising above the rugged desolations of the spurs of the Merrick.

"Bide a wee," says our guide, "and I will show you a new world." He strides on, a very sturdy Columbus. The new world comes upon us, and one of great marvel it is. At first the haze somewhat hides it—so high are we that we seem to be on the roof of the Southern Creation—riding on the rigging of all things, as indeed we are. Half-a-dozen steps and "There's Loch Enoch!" says Columbus, with a pretty taste in climax.

Strangest sight in all this Galloway of strange sights is Loch Enoch—so truly another world that we cannot wonder if the trouts of this uncanny water high among the hills decline to wear tails in the ordinary fashion of common and undistinguished trouts in lowland lakes, but carry them docked and rounded after a mode of their own.

This still evening Enoch glows like a glittering silver-rimmed pearl looking out of the tangled grey and purple of its surrounding with the strength, tenderness, and meaning of a human eye. The Merrick soars away above in two great precipices, whereon Thomas Grierson, writing in 1846, tells us that he found marks showing that the Ordnance surveyors had occupied their hours of leisure in hurling great boulders down into the loch. There were fewer sheep on the Merrick side in those days, or else the tenant of that farm might with reason have objected. It seems, however, something of a jest to suppose that this heathery desolation is really a farm, for the possession of which actual money is paid. Yet our guide tells of an old shepherd, many a year the herd of the Merrick, who, when removed by his master to the care of an easier and lower hill, grew positively homesick for the stern majesty of the monarch of South Country mountains, and related tales of the Brocken spectres he had often seen when the sun was at his back and the great chasm of Enoch lay beneath him swimming with mist.

Loch Enoch spreads out beneath us in an intricate tangle of bays and promontories. As we sit above the loch, the large island with the small loch within it is very prominent. The "Loch-in-Loch" is of a deeper and more distinct blue than the general surface of Loch Enoch, perhaps owing to its green and white setting upon the grassy boulder-strewn island. Another island to the east also breaks the surface of the loch, and the bold jutting granite piers, deeply embayed, the gleaming silver sands, the far-reaching capes so bewilder the eye that it becomes difficult to distinguish island from mainland. It increases our pleasure when the guide says of the stray sheep, which look over the

Loch-in-Loch.

boulders with a shy and startled expression: "These sheep do not often get sight of a man." Probably no part of the Highlands is so free from the presence of mankind as these Southern uplands of Galloway, which were the very fastness and fortress of the Westland Whigs in the fierce days of the Killing.

On the east side of Loch Enoch the Dungeon Hill rises grandly, a thunder-splintered ridge of boulders and pinnacles, on whose slopes we see strewn the very bones of creation. Nature has got down here to her pristine elements, and so old is the country, that we seem to see the whole turmoil of "taps and tourocks"—very much as they were when the last of the Galloway glaciers melted slowly away and left the long ice-vexed land at rest under the blow of the winds and the open heaven.

Right in front of us the Star Hill, called also Mulwharchar, lifts itself up into the clear depths of the evening sky—a great cone rounded like a hayrick. At its foot we can see the two exits of Loch Enoch—the true and the false. Our guide points out to us that the Ordnance Survey map makes a mistake with regard to the outlet of Loch Enoch, showing an exit by the Pulscraig Burn at the north-east corner towards Loch Doon—when as a matter of fact there is not a drop of water issuing in that direction, all the water passing by the north-west corner towards Loch Macaterick.

Beyond the levels of desolate, granite-bound, silver-sanded Loch Enoch lies a tumbled wilderness of hills. To the left of the Star is the plateau of the Rig of Millmore, a wide and weary waste, gleaming everywhere with grey tarns and shining "Lochans." Beyond these again are the Kirreoch hills, and the pale blue ridges of Shalloch-on-Minnoch. Every name is interesting here, every local appellation has some reason annexed to it, so that the study of the Ordnance map—even though the official nomenclature enshrines many mistakes—is weighted with much suggestion. But no name or description can give an idea of Loch Enoch itself, lifted up (as it were) close against the sky—nearly 1700 feet above the sea

ON THE MOORS NEAR NEWTON-STEWART

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—with the giant Merrick on one side, the weird Dungeon on the other, and beyond only the grey wilderness stretching mysteriously out into the twilight of the north.

It is with feelings of regret that we take leave of Loch Enoch, and, skirting its edge, make our way eastward to the Dungeon Hill, in order that we may peer down for a moment into the misty depths of the Dungeon of Buchan. A scramble among the screes, a climb among the boulders, and we are on the edge of the Wolf's Slock—the appropriately named wide throat up which so many marauding expeditions have come and gone. We crouch behind a rock and look downward, glad for a moment to get into shelter. For even in the clear warm August night the wind has a shrewd edge to it at these altitudes. Buchan's Dungeon swims beneath us, blue with misty vapour. We can see two of the three lochs of the Dungeon. It seems as if we could almost dive into the abyss, and swim gently downwards to that level plain, across which the Cooran Lane, the Sauch Burn, and the Shiel Burn are winding through "fozy" mosses and dangerous sands. It is not for any man to venture lightly at nightfall, or even in broad daylight, among the links of the Cooran, as it saunters its way through the silver flow of Buchan. The old royal fastness keeps its secret well.

Far across in the distance we can see the lonely steading of the Black Hill o' the Bush, and still farther off the great green whalebacks of Corscrine and others of the featureless Kells range, deepening into grey purple with a bloom upon them where the heather grows thickest, like the skin on a dusky peach.

Now at last the sun is dipping beyond the Merrick, and all the valley to the south, or rather the maze of valleys, grow dim in the shadow. Loch Enoch has turned from gleaming pearl to dusky lead, or, more accurately still, to the dull shimmer that one may see on so unpoetical a thing as cooling gravy. So great are the straits of comparison to which the conscientious artist in words is driven in the description of scenery. But we must turn home-

The Dusk on Enoch.

ward. The Merrick itself is dusking. Enoch falls behind its hummocks of iceworn rocks. We descend rapidly into the valley which leads to Loch Neldricken, threading our way till we come to the grave of the wanderer Cameron, who lost his road and perished in a storm alone upon the waste. The form of the body is still plainly to be seen upon the emerald turf, and certainly the boulders around give good evidence of the power of the winter storms. Our guide, with his strong hill voice, tells us of these times of fear, when winter sends the spindrift of the snow hurtling across the mountains. The storms here are rarely fatal to many sheep, partly because it is the office of the shepherd to keep an eye upon the places where the sheep are collected, but still more because of a very wonderful piece of special adaptation. It is not upon these rough hills of boulder and heather that many sheep are lost. Smoother hills are far more dangerous. The overlapping rocks, tossed and set in fantastic congeries of crags, seem to suck in the snow automatically. The granite blocks, lying all around, give shelter, and as it were provide a thousand dust-bins, into which the wind, careful and untiring housemaid, sweeps the snow almost as it falls. At least, since the "close cover" of the famous "sixteen drifty days," there has been recorded here no great or widespread loss of the black-faced sheep—the current coin of the hills.

Presently we are skirting the "silver sand" of Loch Neldricken, which, as our guide says, would be good scythe sharpening, were it not that so much better can be got at Loch Enoch. For from these uplands the "straikes" of the lowland scythes are supplied with the pure flinty granite sand which puts an edge upon the blades that cut the hay and win the golden corn. Emery straikes are used for easy corn by some new-fangled people who are ill to satisfy with the good gifts by Nature provided. But the stalwart men who mow in the water meadows know well that nothing can put the strident gripping edge upon their blade like the true Loch Enoch granite sand.

It is dusking into dark as we master the final slope, and to the barking of dogs, and the cheerful voices of kindly folk, we

overpass the last hill dyke, and enter the sheltering homestead of Glenhead, which looks so charmingly out over its little crofts down to the precipice-circled depths of Loch Trool.

Ere we came over the hill, however, we entered the sheep "buchts," a very fortress of immense granite blocks, set upon a still more adamantine foundation of solid rock—a monument of stern and determined workmanship. Indeed, something more than sheep bars are needed to restrain the breed of sheep that is to be found hereabouts—animals that by no means conduct themselves like slow-going and respectable Southdowns or aldermanic Cheviots, but fight like Turks, climb like goats, and run like hares. We remember taking a newly-imported Englishman over a Galloway hill. We were climbing in the heat, when suddenly, with a rush, a fearsome animal, with twisted horns half a yard long, and a black and threatening face, rose behind us, leapt a wide watercourse and disappeared up the precipice, amid a rattle of stones scattering downward from its hoofs.

The Buchts of the Mid Burn.

"What wild beast is that?" asked our companion in some trepidation.

"A Galloway tip," we replied.

"And what might a 'tip' be, when he's at home?"

"Only a sheep," we replied calmly.

The Englishman, accustomed to the breed of Leicester, looked at us with a curious expression in his eyes.

"If I were you I would not try to take in an orphan—and one far from home," he said. "We English may be verdant, but at least we do know a sheep when we see on .

And to this day he does not believe it was " nly a sheep" that he saw on our slopes of granite and heathe.

As we lay asleep that night, the sound of the wind drawing lightly up and down the valleys breathed in upon us, and the subtle smell of honey came to us in the early morning from the ranged beehives under the wall. Around was a great and sweet peace—pure air refined by heather and the wild

winds—content so perfect that we wished to live for ever with the chief guide and his partner divided between the travail of writing and the rest of reading.

But it is morning over Glen Trool. The light has poured over from the east, flooding the valley. But there is a mist coming and going upon Curleywee. Lamachan hides his head. Only the "taps" towards Loch Dee are clear.

We are out amid the stir of the farmyard with its pleasant familiar noises.

"D'ye see yon three stanes on the hill atween it and the sky?" asks the Man of the Hills.

"We see them," we reply, making out three knobs upon the ultimate ridges.

"Weel, yon's your road for Loch Dee, but you'll hae to gang a guid bit back."

He is right—the canny Galwegian—Loch Dee is over there, but it certainly is a "guid bit back."

It was easier to get the direction of the three silent watchers on the hill crest than to keep straight for them over the tangle of heather and moss which lies between.

Clashdaan.

The way to the loch seems to be over the white granite bed of a burn that comes down from the rugged sides of Craiglee. Following it we reach the high and precipitous side of the hill, and follow the burn up to the "lirk of the hill" where the streamlet takes its rise. This burn, which comes over the white rocks in sheets in wet weather, is named the Trostan. Near the summit of Craiglee lies a little loch, high up among the crags—called the Dhu Loch; sombre, dark, and impressive. From the jutting point of rock, called the Snibe, which looks towards the north, we see the great chasm of the Dungeon from the south. We can catch the glint of the Dungeon Lochs far to the north—all three of them—while nearer the Cooran Lane and other burns seek their ways through treacherous sands and "wauchie wallees" to Loch Dee, which lies beneath us to the south. Seen from the Snibe, Loch Dee looks its best. It has indeed no such remarkable or distinctive character as the splendid series of

lochs between Glenhead and Enoch. It would be but a wild sheet of water on a featureless moor, were it not that it derives dignity from the imminent sides of Craiglee and the Dungeon.

We reach the bottom by a narrow cleft that leads downwards from the Snibe towards the loch. It is called the Clint of Clashdaan. Then comes a wading wetfoot through some boggy land grazed over by sheep (which must surely be born web-footed), till we reach the boathouse on the western shore of Loch Dee. Beyond is a strip of sand so inviting and delightful to the feet that in a few moments we are swimming across the narrows of the loch. Then follows a run on the beach in costume which might occasion some remark on Brighton beach, and a brisk rub down with the outside of a rough coat of Harris tweed in lieu of a towel. In a few minutes the steep sides of Curley-wee are bringing out a brisk reaction of perspiration. It had been our thought that from Curleywee it might be possible to obtain a general view of the country of the Granite Lochs, but the persistent downward sweep of the mist makes this impossible. Yet by persevering along the verge we have some very striking glimpses down into the deep glen of Trool, at the upper end of which lie cosily enough the farmhouses of Buchan and Glenhead. High up on the side of Curleywee, where the whaup are crying the name of the mountain, like porters at a railway station, we come upon two or three deep little pools in which the trouts are rising. How they get up there is a question which others must settle. There they are, and there for us they shall stop. If they got up the "jaws" which come pouring over the side of the hill somewhat farther down, they are certainly genuine acrobats—the descendants of some prehistoric freshwater flying-fishes.

As soon as we leave the ridge above, it is downhill steeply all the way till we come to hospitable Glenhead, where by the burn the warm-hearted master is working quietly among the sheaves. It does one good in the turmoil of the world to think that there are kind souls living so quietly and

happily thus remote from the world, with the Merrick and the Dungeon lifting their heads up into the clouds above them, and over all Loch Enoch looking up to God, with a face sternly sweet, only less lonely than Himself.

III.—WHAT WE SAY THERE, AND HOW WE SAY IT

Galloway Humour.

No one can pass even a short space of time among the people of our Galloway countryside without being made aware, in ways pleasant and the reverse, of the great amount of popular humour ever bubbling up from the heart of the common people. It is to them the salt of intercourse, the grease on the dragging axles of their life. Not often does it reach the stage of being expressed in literary form. It is lost in the stir of farm-byres, in the cheerful talk of ingle-nooks. You can hear it being windily exchanged in the greetings of shepherds crying the one to the other across the valleys. It finds way in the observations of passing ploughmen as they meet on the way to the mill, and kirk, and market.

For example, an artist is busy at his easel by the wayside.[1] A rustic is looking over his shoulder in the manner of the free and independent Scot. Another rustic is in a field near by with his hands in his pockets. He is not sure whether it is worth while to take the trouble to mount the dyke, for the uncertain pleasure of looking at a mere picture. "What is he doing, Jock?" asks he in the field of his better-situated mate. "Drawin' wi' pent!" returns Jock, over his shoulder. "Is't bonny?" again asks the son of toil in the field. "OCHT BUT BONNY!" comes back the prompt and decided answer of the critic. Of consideration for the artist's feelings there is not a trace. Yet both of these rustics will appreciatively relate the incident on coming in from the field and washing

[1] It was that admirable Galloway artist and our good friend Mr. W. S. M'George, A.R.S.A.

IN THE RAIDERS' COUNTRY

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themselves, concluding with this rider: "An' he didna look ower weel pleased, I can tell ye! Did he, Jock?"

This great body of popular humour first found its way into the channels of our historic literature mainly in the form of ballads and songs—often very free in taste and broad in expression, because they were struck from the rustic heart, and accordingly smelt of the farmyard, where common things are called by their common names.

But in time these rose higher in the poems of Lindsay, in some of Knox's prose—very grim and humorsome it is—and in Dunbar and Henrysoun, mixed in each case with strong personal elements. Burns alone caught and held the full force of it, for he was of the soil, and grew up near to it. So that to all time he must remain the finest expression of almost all forms of lowland feeling. As to prose, chap-books and pamphlets innumerable carried on the stream, which for the most part was conveyed underground, till, in the fulness of time, Walter Scott came to give Scottish humour world-wide fame in the noble series of imaginative writings by which he set his native land beside the England of William Shakespeare.

Scott was the first great harvester of our old national stock of humour, and right widely he gathered, as those know who have striven to follow in his trail. Hardly a chap-book but he has been through, hardly a generation of our national history that he has not touched and adorned. Yet, because Scotland is a wide place, and Scottish humour also in every sense broad, no future humorist need feel straitened within their ample bounds.

Scott a Literary Harvester.

Of all the cherished delusions of the inhabitant of the southern part of Great Britain with regard to his northern brother, the most astonishing is the belief that the Scot is destitute of humour. Other delusions may be dissipated by a tourist ticket and the ascent of Ben Nevis—such as that, north of the Tweed, we dress solely in the kilt—which we do not, at least, during the day; that we support life solely upon haggis and the product of the national distilleries; that

the professors of Edinburgh University, being "panged fu' o' lear," communicate the same to their students in the Gaelic—a thing which, though not altogether unprecedented, is, I am told, considered somewhat informal by the Senatus.

These may be taken as examples of the grosser delusions which leap to the eye, and are received upon the ear as often as the subject of Scotland arises in a company of the untravelled, and, as we should say, "glaikit Englisher."

I should much like to say, here and now, as Professor Blackie used to remark vigorously, that "every person who despises Scottish national humour proves himself to be either a conceited puppy or an ignorant fool." Personally I should like to add—"or both!"

R. L. Stevenson on the Grey Land.

There is a classical passage in the works of Mr. R. L. Stevenson, which, with the metrical psalms, the poems of Burns, and the Catechism, ought to be required of every Scottish man or woman before they be allowed to think of getting married. It is sad to see young people setting up house and so ill-fitted for the battle of life. The passage from Mr. Stevenson is as follows. I protest that I never can read it, even for the hundredth time, without a certain sympathetic moisture of the eye, for it might have been written of Galloway, and even of Balmaghie:—

"There is no special loveliness in that grey country, with its rainy, sea-beat archipelago; its fields of dark mountains; its unsightly places, black with coal; its treeless, sour, unfriendly-looking corn-lands; its quaint, grey, castled city, where the bells clash of a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat. I do not know if I desire to live there; but let me hear, in some far land, a kindred voice sing out, 'Oh! why left I my hame?' and it seems at once as if no beauty under the kind heavens, and no society of the good and wise, can repay me for my absence from my country. And though I would rather die elsewhere, yet in my heart of hearts I long to be buried among good Scots clods. I will say it fairly, it grows upon me with every year; there are no

stars so lovely as Edinburgh street-lamps. The happiest lot on earth is to be born a Scotsman. You must pay for it in many ways, as for all other advantages on earth. You have to learn the Paraphrases and the Shorter Catechism; you generally take to drink; your youth, so far as I can make out, is a time of louder war against society, of more outcry, and tears, and turmoil, than if you were born, for instance, in England. But, somehow, life is warmer and closer, the hearth burns more redly; the lights of home shine softer on the rainy street, the very names, endeared in verse and music, cling nearer round our hearts. An Englishman may meet an Englishman to-morrow, upon Chimborazo, and neither of them care; but when the Scotch wine-grower told me of Mons Meg, it was like magic.

> "'From the dim shieling on the misty island,
> Mountains divide us and a world of seas;
> Yet still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
> And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.'"

. . . . . .

Our humour lies so near our feeling for our country that I would almost say, if we do not feel this quotation—aye, and feel it in our bones—we may take it for granted that both the humour and the pathos of Scotland are to be hid from us during the term of our natural lives.

However, as Mr. Whistler said when a friend pointed out to him a certain suggestion of the landscape Whistlerian in an actual sunset—"Ah, yes, nature is creeping up!" So we may say, with reference to its appreciation of Scottish humour, England is certainly "creeping up." The numbers of editions of Scott, edited, illustrated, and annotated, plain and coloured, prove it. It is always a good brick to throw at a literary pessimist, to tell him the number of editions of Scott that have appeared during the last half-dozen years. I do not know how many there are—I have no idea—but I always say fifty-three and four more coming, for that sounds exact, and as if one had all the statistics up one's

sleeve. If you say these little things with a confident air, you are never contradicted. No one knows any different. It is a habit worth acquiring. I am not proud of the accomplishment, but I don't mind saying that I learned the trick from listening to the evidence of skilled witnesses in His Majesty's Courts of Law.

Let us look for a moment at our national humour of fact. We Galwegians were, for instance, a people intensely loyal to our kings and queens. Yet, so long as they were with us, we dissembled our affection. Alas, we never told our love! In fact, we generally rebelled against them, so that they might have a good time hanging us up in the Grassmarket and ornamenting the Netherbow with our heads. But as soon as we had driven these same kings and queens into exile, we became tremendously loyal, and kept up constant trokings with the exiled at Carisbrook, in Holland, or drinking to "the king over the water." Our very Galloway Cameronians became Jacobites and split on the subject, as our Scottish kirks always did—being apparently of the variety of *animalculæ* which multiply by fission. So we went on, till we got them back, and again seated on the throne with a firm seat and a tight rein. Then we rebelled once more, just to keep them aware of themselves. Thus our national humour expressed itself in our history.

Our Scottish Loyalty.

Or again we had our family feuds. It mattered not whether we were kilted Macs of the North, or steel-capped, leather-jacked Kennedies and Douglasses of the South, we loved our name and clan, and stood for them even against king and country. But, nevertheless, we arose early in the morning and had family worship, like the respected and respectable Mr. John Mure of Auchendraine. Then we rode forth, with spear and pistolet, to convince some erring brother of the clan that he must not do so. I came upon a delightful entry from an old family register the other day. It was much mixed up with religious reflection, but it had this trifling memorandum interpolated

Our Southland Feuds.

to break the placid flow of the spiritual meditation: "This day and date oor Jock stickit to deid Wat Maxwell in Traquair! Glory be to the Father and to the Son!"

This also is a part of our national humour of history.

A certain Master Adam Blackadder was an apprentice boy in Stirling in the troublous times of the Covenant. The military were coming, and the whole Whiggish town took flight.

"'I would have been for running too,' says young Adam, being a merchant's loon. 'I would have been for the running too, but my master discharged me from leaving the shop. For,' said he, 'they will not have the confidence to take the like of you, a silly young lad.' However, a few days thereafter I was gripped by two messengers early in the morning, who, for haste, would not suffer me to tie up my stockings, or put about my cravat, but hurried me away to Provost Russel's lodgings—a violent persecutor and ignorant wretch! The first word he spak to me (putting on his breeches) was, 'Is not this braw wark, sirr, that we maun be troubled wi' the like o' you?' I answered (brave loon, Adam!), 'Ye hae gotten a braw prize, my lord, that has claucht a poor 'prentice!' He answered, 'We canna help it, sirr; we must obey the king's lawes!' 'King's lawes, my lord,' I says, 'there is no such lawes under the sun!' For I had heard that, by the bond, heritors were bound for their tenants and masters for their servants—*and not servants for themselves* (and here Adam had him!). 'No such lawes, sirr!' says our sweet Provost; 'ye lee'ed like a knave and traitour, as ye are. So, sirr, ye come not here to dispute the matter. Away with him, away with him to the prison.'"

So accordingly they haled away the too humorous apprentice of Stirling to Bridewell, where, as he says, and as we should expect, he was never merrier in his life—albeit with iron gates about him, and waiting on the mercy of the "sweet provost," whom he surprised "putting on his breeks."

But how exquisitely Scottish and humorous is the whole scene—the lad, not to be "feared," and well content to get

the better of the Provost in the battle of words, derives an admirable satisfaction from the difficulties of his enemy, who has perforce to argue while "putting on his breeks," a time when teguments, not arguments, are most fitting. Meanwhile the Provost is grimly conscious that he is getting the worst of it, and that what the 'prentice loon said to him will be a sad jest when the bailies congregate round the civic punch-bowl. Yet, for all that, he is not unappreciative of the lad's national right to say his say, and, not without some reluctance, silences him with the incontrovertible argument of the "iron gates." This also is Scottish and national, and could hardly be native elsewhere.

The Humour of History.

As we go on to consider these and other similar circumstances chronicled in our lowland history, certain ill-defined but obvious sorts and kinds of national humour emerge. They look at us out of all manner of unexpected places—out of the records of the Great Seal, out of the minutes of the Privy Council, out of the State trials, out of the findings of Galloway juries. "We find that the prisoner killit not the particular man aforesaid, yet that *nevertheless* he is deserving of hanging." On general grounds, it is to be presumed, and to encourage the others! So hanged the acquitted man duly was, much as Mossman was hanged, on May 20, 1785, because he "cam' frae Carrick!"

Disentangling some of these threads of humour which shoot scarlet through the hodden grey of our Southland records, we can distinguish four kinds of historical humour—first, the humour which I propose, without any particular law or licence, to call by analogy "Polter Humour." The best attested of all spectral apparitions is a certain Galloway ghost—the spirit which troubled the cothouse of Collin, in the parish of Rerrick, for many months, and was only finally exorcised after many wrestlings with all the ministers of the country-side in Presbytery assembled. It was a merry and noisy spirit, of the type called (I am informed) the Polter Ghost, a perfect master of the whistling, pinching, vexing, stone-throwing, spiritualistic athletic. Hence, following this analogy, we may

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call a considerable part of our lowland humour "Polter Humour." It is the same kind of thing which, mixed with the animal spirits and primitive methods of the undergraduate, leads him occasionally to thump upon the floor of philosophy class-rooms in a manner most unphilosophic. I am, it may be, thinking of the things that were in the good old times, when it was a mistake, trivial in the extreme, to forget one's college note-book, but an offence capital to leave behind one's stick. But still the historic Polter Humour of Scotland is largely the humour of the unlicked cub, playing with such dangerous weapons as swords and battle-axes, instead of boot-laces and blacking.

"There is no discourse between a full man and a fasting. Sit ye doon, Sir Patrick Grey," says the Black Douglas to the king's messenger, sent to Thrieve Castle to demand the release of Maclellan of Bombie. Sir Patrick, who might have known better, sits him down. The Black Douglas moves his hand and his eyebrow once, and even while the messenger is solacing himself with "doo-tairt" and a cup of sack, poor Maclellan is had out to the green and beheaded. Sir Patrick finishes, and wipes his five-pronged forks in the national manner underneath his doublet. He is ready to talk business, and so is the Black Douglas—*now*. "There is your man. Tell His Majesty he is most welcome to him," says the Douglas; "it is a pity that he wants the head!" This, though doubtless wholly invented by the historian, is a good example of the Polter Humour *in excelsis*—the undergraduate playing with the headsman's axe instead of the harmless necessary cudgel.

The Fiction of the Historian.

This is a primitive kind of humour of savage origin; and how many varieties of it there are among savage tribes, and amongst that largest of all savage tribes, the noble outlaw Ishmaels of the world, *Boys*—Mr. Andrew Lang alone knows.

Of this Polter Humour, perhaps the finest instances are to be found in the chap-books of the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first ten years of the nineteenth. So soon as Scott had made the Scottish dialect into a national

language, the edge seemed completely to go off these productions. With one consent they became flat, stale, and unprofitable. Indeed, they can hardly be called strictly "profitable" reading at the best. For it is like walking down a South Italian lane to read them, so thickly do causes of offence lie around. But for all that, in them we have the rough give-and-take of life at the country weddings, the holy fairs, the kirns and christenings of an older time. I never realised how great and clean Robert Burns was, till I saw from what a state of utter depravity he has rescued such homely topics as these. Yet in these days of family magazines we are uneasily conscious that even Robert Burns has need to have his feet wiped before he comes into our parlours. As a corrective to this over-refinement, I should prescribe a counter-irritant in the shape of a short but drastic course in the dialect chapbooks of the final thirty years of the eighteenth century.

Polter Humour.

In the novels of Smollett is to be found the more (or less) literary expression of this form of humour. True, one cannot read very much of it at a time, for the effect of a score of pages acts physically on the stomach like sea-sickness. But yet we cannot deny that there *is* this Polter element in Scottish humour, though the fact has been largely and conveniently forgotten in these days. There are, however, some few pearls distributed among an inordinate number of swine-sties. Yet we can see the origin, or at least the manifestation, of this peculiar humour in the old civic enactment which caused it to be proclaimed that any citizen walking down the Canongate upon the side-causeways after a certain hour of e'en, did so at "the peril of his head." There is, also, to this day a type of sturdy, full-blooded Scot, who cannot imagine anything much funnier than the emptying of a pail of "suds" out of a window—upon some one else's head. Sometimes this gentleman gets into the House of Commons, and laughs boisterously when another member sits down upon his new and glossy hat, which cost him a guinea that morning.

Among the tales of James Hogg (who, though not of

Galloway, deserved to be) there are many examples of Polter Humour. Hogg is, in some of his many rambling stories, the greatest example in literature of the Scottish picaresque. He delights to carry his hero—who is generally nobody in particular, only a hero—from adventure to adventure without halt or plot, depending upon the swing of the incident to carry him through. And, indeed, so it mostly does. "The Bridal of Polmood," for instance, is of this class. It is not a great original work, like the "Confessions of a Justified Sinner," or a delightful medley of tales like "The Shepherd's Calendar." But it is a sufficiently readable story, at least as like the life of the times as Tennyson's courtly knights are to the actual Round Table men of Arthur the King. In the "Adventures of Basil Lee" and in "Widow Watts' Courtship," we find more of the Polter Humour. But, on the whole, the finest instance of Hogg's rattling give-and-take is his briskly humorous and admirable story of "The Souters of Selkirk."

From recent Scottish literature this rough and thoroughly national species of humour has been almost banished. But there is no reason why, having cleaned its feet a little, the Polter Humour might not be revived. There is plenty of it, healthy and hearty, surviving in the nooks and corners of the hills.

The second species of Galloway (and Scottish) humour which I shall try to discriminate is what, for lack of a better name, I shall call the Humour of Irony. It is a quieter variety of the last. Of this sort, and to me an exquisite example, is the advice Donald Cargill offered to Claverhouse as he was riding from the field of Drumclog, after his defeat, as hard as his horse could gallop. "Will ye no bide for the afternoon diet of worship?" A jest which did credit to the grim old "faithful contender," considering that he had been so lately a prisoner in the hands of John Graham himself. I am sure that Claverhouse appreciated the ironical edge of the observation, even if he did not forget the jester. But my Lord Dundee could be ironical himself with some pith.

Irony.

"Two soldiers reported a squabble between two of their officers to Colonel Graham.

"'How knew ye of the matter?' said Claverhouse.

"'We saw it,' they replied.

"'But how saw ye it?' he continued, pressing them.

"'We were on guard, and, hearing both din and turmoil, we set down our pieces and ran to see.'

"Whereupon Colonel Graham did arise, and gave them many sore paiks, because that they had left their duty to gad about and gaze on that which concerned them not."

In like manner, and in the same excellent antique style, it is told of Duke Rothes that, finding that his lady was going just a step too far in the freedom with which she entertained proscribed ministers under his very nose, he sent her ladyship a message, that it behoved her to keep her "black-coated messans" closer to her heel, or else that he would be obliged to kennel them for her.

Perhaps the finest instance of this humour is the well-known story, probably entirely apocryphal, but none the less worthy on that account, of the south-country laird, who, with his man John, was riding to market. (The tale is, I think, in "Dean Ramsay," and, writing far from books, I quote from memory.) The laird and John are passing a hole in the moor, when the laird turns his thumb over his shoulder, and says, "John, I saw a tod gang in there!"

"Did ye, indeed, laird?" cries John, all his hunting blood instantly on fire. "Ride ye your lane to the toon; I'll howk the craitur oot!"

So back goes John for pick and spade, having first, of course, stopped the earth. The laird rides his way, and all day he is foregathering with his cronies, and "preeing the drappie" at the market-town—ploys in which his henchman would ably and very willingly have seconded him. It is the hour of evening, and the laird rides home. He comes to a mighty excavation on the hillside. .e trench is both long and deep. Very tired, and somewhat short-grained in temper,

BY THE DEE, NEAR KIRKCUDBRIGHT

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John is seated upon a mound of earth, vast as the foundation of a fortress. "There's nae fox here, laird!" says John, wiping the honest sweat of endeavour from his brow. The laird is not put out. He is, indeed, exceedingly pleased with himself. "'Deed, John," he says, "I wad hae been muckle surprised gin there had been a fox in the hole. *It's ten year since I saw the tod gang in there!*"

Here the nationality of the ironical humour consists in the non-committal attitude of the laird. It is none of his business if John chooses to spend his day in digging a fox-hole. It is, no doubt, a curious method of taking exercise when one might be at a market ordinary. But still there is no use trying to account for tastes, and the laird like a kindly man leaves John to the freedom of his own will. History does not relate what were John's remarks when the laird had fared homeward. And that, perhaps, is as well.

This, the Method Ironical, with an additional spice of kindliness, is also Sir Walter's favourite mode of humour. It is, for instance, the basis of Caleb Balderston, especially in the famous scene in the house of Gibbie Girder, the man of tubs and barrels:—

"Up got mother and grandmother, and scoured away, jostling each other as they went, into some remote corner of the tenement, where the young hero of the evening was deposited. When Caleb saw the coast fairly clear, he took an invigorating pinch of snuff to sharpen and confirm his resolution. 'Cauld be my cast,' thought he, 'if either Bide-the-Bent or Girder taste that broche of wild fowl this evening.' And then, addressing the eldest turnspit, a boy of eleven years old, and putting a penny into his hand, he said, 'Here is twal pennies, my man; carry that ower to Mistress Smatrash, and bid her fill my mill wi' sneeshin', and I'll turn the broche for ye i' the meantime—an' she'll gie ye a gingerbread snap for yer pains.'

"No sooner had the elder boy departed on his mission, than Caleb, looking the remaining turnspit gravely and steadily in the face, removed from the fire the spit containing the wild

fowl of which he had undertaken the charge, clapped his hat on his head, and fairly marched off with it."

Comfort for Authors.

It will not surprise you to hear that in Scott's own time this mode of humour was thought to be both rude and undignified, and many were the criticisms of bad taste and the accusations of literary borrowing that were made, both against this great scene, and against similar other chapters of his most famous books. Their very success promoted the rage of the envious. We find, for instance, the magazines of the time full of the most ill-natured notices, which, in view of the multiplied editions of the great Wizard, read somewhat strangely at this day. Let me take one at random :—

"Scott is just going on in the same blindfold way, and seems, in this as in other things, only to fulfil the destiny assigned to him by Providence—the task of employing the hundred black men of Mr. James Ballantyne's printing office, Coul's Close, Canongate—for I suspect that this is the only real purpose of the Author of 'Waverley's' existence."

I read this over when the critics prove unkind. For these words are only the beginning of as satisfactory a "slating" as ever fell to the lot of mortal writer.

But nothing tells us more surely of the essential greatness of the master than the way in which, by a few touches, he can so ennoble a humorous figure that he passes at a bound from the humorous to the pathetic, and touches the springs of our tears the more readily that up to that point he has chiefly moved our laughter.

Thus, at the close of Scott's great humorous conception of Caleb Balderston, we have a few words which like a beacon serve to illuminate all his past humours—his foraging, his bowl-breaking, his unprecedented readiness to lie for the sake of the glories of his master's house. It is the last scene in "The Bride of Lammermoor" :—

"'But I have a master,' cried Caleb, still holding him fast, 'while the heir of Ravenswood breathes. I am but a servant; but I was born your father's—your grandfather's servant—I

was born for the family—I have lived for them—I would die for them! Stay but at home and all will be well!'

"'Well, fool, well!' said Ravenswood, 'vain old man; nothing hereafter in life will be well with me, and happiest is the hour that shall soonest close it!'

"So saying, he extricated himself from the old man's hold, threw himself on his horse, and rode out at the gate; but, instantly turning back, he threw towards Caleb, who hastened to meet him, a heavy purse of gold.

"'Caleb,' he said, with a ghastly smile, 'I make you my executor,' and again turning his bridle, he resumed his course down the hill.

"The gold fell unheeded on the pavement, for the old man ran to observe the course which had been taken by his master. Caleb hastened to the eastern battlement, which commanded the prospect of the whole sands, very near as far as the village of Wolf's Hope. He could easily see his master riding in that direction, as fast as his horse could carry him. The prophecy at once rushed on Balderston's mind, that the Lord of Ravenswood would perish on the Kelpie's Flow, which lay halfway between the tower and the links, or sand-knolls, to the northward of Wolf's Hope. He saw him, accordingly, reach the fatal spot, but he never saw him pass farther.

". . . Only one vestige of his fate appeared. A large sable feather had been detached from his hat, and the rippling waves of the rising tide wafted it to Caleb's feet.

"The old man took it, dried it, and placed it in his bosom."

Scott is the most unquotable of authors, yet I should be prepared to stake his genius on a few passages like this, in which, by one or two magic touches, his usual kindly and careless style suffers a sea-change into something rich and rare—the irony of the gods and of insatiable and inappeasable Fate. Then, indeed, one actually sees the straw and stubble, the wood and stone of his ordinary building being transmuted before our eyes into fairy gold at the touch of him who,

whatever his carelessness and slovenliness, is yet the great Wizard of all time, and the master of all who weave the Golden Lie.

I now come to a humour which is less represented in the trials and tragical records which constitute the main part of the inheritance of our tumultuous and unpeaceful province. This, again, for lack of a better name, I call the "Humour of About-the-Doors."

The Humour of "About-the-Doors."

It is hard to say when this began; but probably with the first of the race—for the Galwegian has ever been noted for making the most of his man-servant and his maid-servant, his ox and his ass, and especially of the stranger within his gates. Concerning the Scot's repute for haughtiness, John Major says in 1521 (I am quoting from Mr. Hume Brown's admirable "Early Scotland"):—

"Sabellicus, who was no mean historian, charges the Scots with being of a jealous temper, and it must be admitted that there is some colour for this charge to be gathered elsewhere. . . . A man that is puffed up strives for some pre-eminence among his fellows, and when he sees that other men are equal to him, or but little inferior, he is filled with rage and breaks out into jealousy. I do not deny (says this most honest Major) that some of the Scots may be boastful and puffed up, but whether they suffer more than their neighbours from such like faults, I have not quite made up my mind. Sabellicus also asserts that the Scots delight in lying; but to me it is not clear that lies like these flourish with more vigour among the Scots than among other people."

It is pleasant to see Major, nearly four hundred years ago, as the Americans would say, "spreading himself" like the rest of us, in praise of his own particular district of Scotland, after having made out that, in spite of all faults and all temptations, the Scots are yet the noblest people in the world. He is a worthy predecessor of all such as celebrate their Thrums, their Swanston by the Pentland edge, their Yarrow and Tweedside,

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their Lang Toun, their Barncraig and Gushetneuk and Drumtochty, their St. Serf's and Carricktown.

Major has been celebrating the fish of the rivers of Scotland:—

"Besides these there are the Clyde, the Tweed, and many other rivers, all abounding in salmon, turbot, and trout. [How Mr. Andrew Lang would admire to catch a turbot in the pool beneath the Kelso cemetery, where lies Stoddart, that mighty angler.] And near the sea is plenty of oysters, as well as crabs, and polypods of marvellous size. One crab or polypod is larger than thirty crabs such as are found in the Seine. The shells of the jointed polypods that you see in Paris clinging to the ropes of the pile-driving engines are a sufficient proof of this. In Lent and in summer, at the winter and summer solstice, people go in the early morning from mine own Gleghornie and the neighbouring parts of the shore, drag out the polypods and crabs with hooks, and return at noon with well-filled sacks."

"Mine own Gleghornie."

The poor French nation! One native polypod from "mine own Gleghornie" equal to thirty misbegotten polypods of the Seine! And how much nobler 'tis to the polypodic mind to be dragged out with hooks, and stuffed in a bag at the summer and winter solstice than to cling to the ropes of wretched pile-driving engines in the insignificant city of Paris. "Paris for pile-driving, Gleghornie for pleesure," is thus the motto for all true polypods!

And so was it ever, and so, please the pigs, shall it be, so long as this sturdy knuckle-end of Britain sticks out into the Arctic wash of the northern sea.

To every Scot his own house, his own gate-end, his own ingle-nook is always the best, the most interesting, the only thing domestic worth singing about and talking about.

So, deep in the lowland nature, began the Humour of About-the-Doors. It is little wonder, then, that the Scottish romancers have generally begun with descriptions of their own kail-yairds—which are the best kail-yairds—the only true kail-yairds, growing the best curly greens, the most entrancc-

ing leeks and syboes, lying fairest to the noontide heat, and blinked upon, as John Major says, by the kindliest sun, the sun of "mine own Gleghornie."

It appears to me that John Galt, with all his poverty of imagination, is yet the most excellent, as he was the first of all these students of "my ain hoose," and "my ain folk." Galt's names, his characters, the description of the places, delight me like a bonny Scots song sung by a bonny Scots lass—and that is the best kind of singing there is. I care not so greatly for his plots. I can make my own as I go. I am not greatly interested in what happens to the characters. But his Humour of About-the-Doors interests me past telling; and I read Galt arching my back by the fireside, like a pussy-bawdrons when she is stroked the right way. I should like to see an edition of Galt reprinted—it would not need to be edited, for learned comment would spoil it. I am persuaded that an edition of all the Scottish books of Galt would sell to-day better than they ever did in his own time.[1]

Yet I should be sorry, too, for he is a fine, tangled, unexplored garden wild for the wandering Autolycus, and for that I should miss him.

How admirable, for instance, to pull down the first volume of Galt that comes to hand, is the following description of the office-houses of an old Scottish mansion, as it might be seen, even to this day, between Cree and Dee:—

John Galt.

"Of somewhat lower and ruder structure was a desultory mass of shapeless buildings—the stable, sty, barn, and byre, with all the appurtenances properly thereunto belonging, such as peat-stack, dung-heap, and coal-heap, with a bivouacry of invalided utensils, such as bottomless boyns, headless barrels, and brushes maimed of their handles—to say nothing of the body of the cat which the undealt-with packman's cur worried

[1] In contrast with the usual fate of such suggestions, this hint, first thrown out many years ago, ripened into an excellently printed edition of the more worthy works of John Galt, published by Messrs. Blackwood of Edinburgh.

on Saturday se'enight. The garden was suitable to the offices and mansion. It was surrounded, but not enclosed, by an undressed hedge, which in more than fifty places offered tempting admission to the cows. The luxuriant grass-walks were never mowed but just before hay-time, and every stock of kale and cabbage stood in its garmentry of curled blades, like a new-made Glasgow bailie's wife on the first Sunday after Michaelmas, dressed for the kirk in the many-plies of her flounces."

Now there are people who do not care for this sort of thing, just as there are folk who prefer the latest concocted perfume to the old-fashioned southernwood that our grandmothers used doucely to take to the kirk with them folded in their napkins. For me, I could not spare the stave of a single barrel, nor the ragged remains of a single boyn. I take them with a mouth like an alms-dish; and, like the most celebrated of charity boys, I ask for more.

I need not point the moral or enter into the history of the Humour of About-the-Doors in recent fiction. Mr. Stevenson, in "Portraits and Memories," Mr. Barrie and Dr. Watson in all their books, have chronicled how the world grew for them when they were growing, and how the young thoughts moved briskly within them. Mr. Stevenson, being more subjective, was interested mainly in these things as an extension and explanation of his own personality. He saw the child he was, the lad he grew to be, move among these surroundings, and they took substance and colour from the very keenness and zest of his reminiscence. Mr. Barrie, stiller and less ready to be the world's friend, waits round the corner, and grips everything as it passes him. But all his life Mr. Stevenson adventured out to seek strange lands. Already, as a child on the shores of an unseen Samoa, he had built him a lordly pleasure-house to the music of the five waterfalls. For he was the eternal Argonaut, the undying treasure-seeker. Each morning he woke and went out with the hope that to-day he would find a new world. To him the sun never

R. L. Stevenson.

grew old, and verily the hunter hunted the hill to the day's ending ere he came to "lay him down with a will." Rare, very rare, but almost heartbreaking when they do occur, are Mr. Stevenson's tendernesses about his native land—

> "Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
> Hills of home! And to hear again the call—
> Hear about the graves of the martyrs the pee-wees crying—
> And hear no more at all!"

J. M. Barrie.

Mr. Barrie's feet, without ever straying so far, yet carry him on the track of many a romance, woven of tears and laughter when the world was young for us all. The skies may be unkindly, the seasons dour, the steps steep, and the bread bitter—in Angus and in Thrums. Hard the lot and heavy the sorrow there! Up the steps the bowed woman goes to write a letter, in which the only cry of affection, "My dear son, Queery," is never uttered by her lips. The bent-backed weaver wheels his web up the brae with creaking wheelbarrow, and lo, in a moment Thrums melts away—we see before us the Eden door, at which stands the angel with the sword of flame, and Adam, bending to his mattock, is earning the first bairn's bread in the sweat of his brow. There sits Jess by her window, and there Leeby lies in her quiet grave, while never any more comes a "registrardy" letter from London, when the blithe postman's knock had scarce time to fall before flying feet were at the door to welcome Jamie's letter. For Jess is Eve, the ancient mother, bearing her heavier burden. Because the secret of Eve is that woman's sorrow only begins with the bringing forth. Then, deepest and dreadest of all, there is Cain going out upon the waste—a bloodless if not a guiltless Cain, who has only broken those three hearts that loved him—and with them his own. I never want to read any more what I once read of Jamie fleeing hot-foot over the commonty—yet, like a hunted thing, ever and anon looking back through the darkness. I want to go upstairs and look at some bairns that lie asleep, each in his cot—to make sure!

THE ISLES OF FLEET, FROM THE CREETOWN ROAD

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There are other humours which are sib to our Galloway people—and to them alone. These I cannot presently deal with, for time would fail me to tell of the Humour of the Out-of-Doors, the humour of byre and stable—the humour of "When the Kye Comes Hame," of the lowsing-time, of Hallowe'en and the Holy Fair. I know not whether there is as much of it now as there once was. They *say* that there is not. I only know that there was enough and to spare in my young time, and that we in those days certainly did not kiss-and-tell. We said little about these jocund humours to our grave and reverend seniors. And now when we are growing suchlike ourselves, I think analogy will help us to believe that there are yet humours in the lives of our juniors as innocent and gladsome, as full of primeval mirth as those of the departed days which we now endeavour, generally so unsuccessfully, to recall.

The Novel of Purpose.

I do not think that any one will succeed in setting down these things—the humours of his country, his lost years, his lost loves, without finding the tears come as often to his eyes as the smile to his lips. But he will not succeed only because he sets himself to do it. He must be purposeful, yet conceal his purpose, and write with his heart. Perhaps no great romance was ever written with what is known as "a purpose." The purpose may indeed emerge, but it must not be thrust before the reader's nose, else he will know that he has strayed into a druggist's shop. And all the beauty of burnished glass, and all the brilliancy of drawer labels will not persuade him that medicine is a good steady diet. He will say, and with some reason, "I asked you for bread—or at least for cakes and ale—and lo! ye have given me Gregory's Mixture!"

So he will walk out, and not deal any more at that shop, save when he wants medicine—for some other person. A lady once sent me a book, and she wrote upon it that she hoped it would do me good. Now, I did not want it for myself particularly, but I had a friend, a wicked lawyer, and I instantly recognised that this good book was the very

thing for him. So I sent it to him; and he has never even thanked me.

Thus is it true what the poet sings—

> "Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn."

Scott did not write with any purpose, save the primitive instinct to tell an entrancing story. And in spite of Gervinus and cartloads of commentators, chiefly Teutonic, I do not believe Shakespeare did either. On this point, however, I am open to conviction; but, like that great ecclesiast, the late Dr. Begg, "I wad like to see the man that could convince me!"

Finally, I desire to say a few words upon the so-called Scottish dialect, not by any means as one who speaks *ex cathedrâ*, but only in order to express my own feelings and beliefs as a dialect-speaking and writing Gallovidian.

We are not of those who look upon Scottish dialect as merely a corrupt kind of English. It would be, indeed, much truer to say that modern English is a corrupt and much-adulterated variety of Scots.

Scots Dialect.

For the old Scottish language has had a history both long and distinguished. In it the first of Scottish romancers, John Barbour, wrote his saga-tales of Wallace and Bruce. In it Dunbar sang songs; Robert Henrysoun, dominie and makkar, fabled; while Ramsay, Burns, Scott, Hogg, and Galt carried down to this generation its roll of noble names.

Of recent years, with the increasing localisation of fiction, there has arisen a danger that this old literary language may be broken up into dialects, each one of which shall possess its interpreters, accurate and intelligent, no doubt, but out of the true and legitimate line of the succession apostolic.

Now, what I understand to be the duty of the Scottish romancer is, that he shall not attempt to represent phonetically the peculiarities of pronunciation of his chosen district, but that he shall content himself with giving the local colour,

incident, character, in the noble, historical, well-authenticated Scots language, which was found sufficient for the needs of Knox, of Scott, and of Burns, to name no other names. Leave to the grim grammarian (of Aberdeen) his "fous" and "fats" and "fars." Let the local vocabulary-maker, excellent and even indispensable man, construct cunning accents and pronunciation-marks. Leave even great Jamieson alone, save for amusement in your hours of ease. As Mr. Stevenson once said, "Jamieson is not Scots, but mere Angus-awa'!" A pregnant saying, and one containing much solid sense.

There is another danger. To write correctly and intelligibly the Scottish dialect is difficult. But it is easy to be vulgar in dialect. Shall our noble literary language be brought down by the vulgarisms of the local funny man to the condition of a mere idiom? Certainly, if the people want it so. But there is no need to call the jumbled rubbish Scottish dialect.

For myself, I love to discern a flavour of antique gentlemanship about a man's written Scots, something that takes me back to knee-breeches and buckled shoes, to hodden grey and Kilmarnock bonnets. They might be a little coarse in those days, but they were not vulgar.

And, indeed, there never was a nobler or more expressive language than the tongue of the dear old ladies who were our grandmothers and great-grandmothers in this our own Galloway. Let us try to keep their speech equally free from Anglicisms which come by rail, Irishisms which arrive by the short sea-route, from the innuendo of the music-hall comic song, and the refinements of the boarding-school—in fact, from all additions, subtractions, multiplications, and divisions, by whomsoever introduced or advocated. There is an idea abroad that in order to write Scottish dialect, it is enough to leave out all final g's and to write *dae* for do—which last, I beg leave to add, is the very hall-mark of the bungler!

Now this honest Doric of ours is a sonsy quean, clean, snod, and well-put-on. Her acquaintance is not to be picked up on the streets or at every close-mouth. The day has been when Peg was a lady, and so she shall be again, and her

standard of manners and speech rank at least as high as that of her sister of the South.

The result may not show in the reports of the Board of Trade; neither will it make Glasgow flourish yet more abundantly, nor the ships crowd thicker about the Tail of the Bank. But it will give broad Scotland a right to speak once more of a Scottish language, and not merely English with a Dundee, a Gallowa', or a "Doon-the-watter" accent. And, above all, it will give her again a literature frankly national, written in her ancient language, according to the finest and most uncorrupted models.

IV.—THE DOLE OF THE THIRTEEN HERRINGS

A Tale of the Sea-Board Parishes

The Peat-leading.

It was a clause in many Galloway leases even down to the middle of last century (and for aught I know it may extend to the present day) that the tenants were bound to give the laird so many days' "peat-leading," for the stacking of what was till recently not only the chief but the only "fewal" of Galloway. The conditions of that contract were often curiously minute—the laird on his part undertaking to give the horses such and such feeds of corn—"good oats" being generally specified, and to the men "bear" bread (the barley loaves of Scripture) or oat-cakes, so many "farles" of a regulation size, with so many cans of home-brewed beer to wash it down, the same that Mr. Cuninghame of Duchrae found served at dinner by the Drumglass table-maid.[1]

A Grippy Laird.

Upon one sea-board Galloway estate the laird, a shrewd man of the snell and grippy sort, had limited his bounty severely to one can of beer, one farle of oat-bread, and one large herring. It can be imagined how popular the service of "peat-leading" was among the dwellers upon that estate, who could very well

[1] See the chapter entitled, "An Eighteenth-Century Galloway Laird."

get oat-cake at home, and as many herrings as they liked for "kitchen" thereto. The laird, a man with a hump shoulder and one hand ever in the small of his back, hopped about in a lively manner upon his stick to see that all did their part of the work—and that none had too much to eat. The lady of the house was a proud dame, who considered that tenants —well, should be kept in their places. So one year it was intimated that the refreshment would be served at the back-door, and that instead of the fash of tables spread upon the green in front of the house, each man should go in person to the housekeeper and draw his ration of oat-cake, herring, and small beer.

Only those who know Scotland, and the intense Scottish pride about small personal affronts, can understand the anger and contempt which this regulation caused among the farmers' sons and even among the cottagers. Only a few availed themselves of the refection, preferring to go hungry rather than suffer the ignominy of the back-door and the housekeeper's dole. Henceforward only the men on the estate and a few "day" carters drew their rations, so that the little hopping laird rubbed his meagre miserly hands at the saving. All the bold farmers' sons and sonsy ploughmen brought their own dinners wrapped in a clean cloth, together with their flasks, and ate and drank somewhat ostentatiously, standing each man by his horse's head in front of the mansion.

But after this had gone on for many years, one day there appeared on the green in front of the house a beggar woman with a brood of hungry children. She had heard of the "peat-leading," which in Galloway is usually the scene of merrymaking and rude plenty. So, being "fremit" and not knowing her man, she had come as a gleaner, sure of taking up at least one basket full of the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

The Beggar Wife.

Upon her and her little skirt-clutching swarm descended the laird, as it had been a hawk-beaked bird of prey stooping from a perch. With one pounce, as it were, he was upon the pitiful brood.

"Gang awa' oot o' this, ye pushionous run-the-countries!" Such was his salutation. "Do ye no ken that I am a Justice o' the Peace, and can commit ye for va-a-grants and thieves! Hungry, are ye? Weel, gang to the Relieving Offisher! Gang to the kirk-session! What for am I cessed in a great sum every year, if it be na to relieve the like o' you? No a single bite nor sup shall ye get here. Aff wi' ye! Oot o' this! Faith, I will set the dowgs on ye!"

This he mingled with many oaths and cursings (for he was a wild man of his tongue) till the blush of shame mounted to the cheeks of his very servants, and as for the young farmers' sons and cottiers within hearing, a black fierce anger burned in their hearts.

But action comes slowly and unreadily to the true Gallovidian. So it was not till the laird had "shooed" the poor woman and her flock off the gravel, and was following them volubly down the road, that one Alexander Barbour left the ranks, flinging the reins of his team to his nearest neighbour.

"Here, honest woman," he cried after the beggar wife, "loup into my cairt!"

And with that he began to pile the astonished bairns one by one over the "shilbins" till all were seated in a confused heap in the cart-bottom. The mother was soon beside them.

To the Back-door!

The laird, too astonished by young Barbour's action even to curse, glowered blackly at him as he strode away to the back-door of the mansion, where he presently demanded thirteen herrings, thirteen farles of oat-cake, and thirteen glasses of small ale.

The laird, who, almost unconsciously, had followed, asked if he had gone mad, while the housekeeper held up her hands in horror at the mere words.

Then upon these two turned young Alexander Barbour, a man slow to anger but white hot when he got there—of that dour, sober Scottish temper which, once roused, is the most terrible of all.

"Thirteen years have I led your peats, laird," he said, loud and clear that all might hear, "and bite nor sup of yours have I not tasted. But every year it has been my right to demand one herring, one farle of cake, and one jug of beer. Well, I take them all now—thirteen herrings, thirteen farles, and thirteen jugs of beer!"

"It is ridiculous!" cried the laird. "It is rank wastry. Such a thing was never heard of!"

"Is it in the lease?" demanded this Daniel so sharply come to judgment.

Then the laird, struck with a sudden pang of coming trouble, could only bow his head. Of a surety it was so nominated in the bond. Every man knew it.

"Then," said Alexander Barbour, turning upon the housekeeper, "be quick. There are others waiting. Bring out the provender according to count and tale!"

And they brought it out.

"Now, lads—the rest o' ye!" cried Alexander Barbour, jerking his head upwards as a signal, for his arms were full. And leaving only one or two for a guard upon the horses, all who had refused the back-door and the housekeeper's bounty for themselves, flocked about the porch to demand it for the poor despised of the earth, while the laird hopped about more like a demented crow than ever.

Nominated in the Bond.

But for him there was no reprieve. For at each objection they turned upon him with the question: "Is it so put down in the lease?"

"WI' THAN!" they cried, with a kind of solemn joy, "hoosekeeper, bring oot the bannocks!"

And they brought them out, some drawing four—some seven, and some twenty supplies, till the oat-cakes and the herrings gave out, and they drew the fine wheat-meal scones, the baked bread, the mutton ham, and for beer they had red wine, till a great gladness filled the whole assembly.

Then in the midst of plenty the beggar wife was driven

out of the laird's policies upon the king's highway. A place was kept for her in a friendly barn, where she had peace and plenty for many weeks, with her brood and her provender about her.

Also there was no loud scoffing or merriment among that crowd of farmers' sons and peat-leaders, though they had kept the wine and the small beer for themselves. Solemnly they clinked the cannikin and drank the laird's good health in front of his own windows, wishing him, with the fine Scots irony, dry and stern, many returns of the present happy occasion, and, above all, the contented mind of the cheerful giver.

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord," quoted Alexander Barbour as he lifted the reins, and "clicked" to his horse.

But the laird looked after him with things in his heart which it is fittest not to write. Nor dared he even speak them, for Alexander Barbour was the son of his best tenant, and the value of land was falling.

Which is the story of the Dole of the Thirteen Herrings, and a very true tale.

SWEETHEART ABBEY

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CHAPTER IV

SWEETHEART ABBEY

"In the ancient Abbey of Dulce Cor,
The pleasant Solway near,
Two passionate hearts they laid of yore
And a love that cast out fear."

So on the title-page of a little book of verses, called by the proper name of the ancient monastic foundation, I wrote twenty years ago. The only remark which a certain metropolitan journal, then at the head of literary criticism, made upon the work was conveyed in these, to me, memorable words, "The caninity of the Latin title of this book will prevent every educated reader from venturing further." Dulce Cor.

Nevertheless, had the educated critic so much as turned the page, he would have found that the little Collect of boyish verse was called after a real Abbey of Dulce Cor, otherwise Douce Cœur—a 'Dulce Cor,' too, where certain memorable things came to pass, where many men lived and died in the odour of sanctity, and whose last abbot continued, long after the Reformation had swept away all his Scottish peers, to discharge his functions, both hospitable and spiritual.

Further, the critic might have read in the same place these excellent words, "lifted" from the *Scoti Monasticon*, and even through the clouds of anonymous stupidity a light might have dawned upon him.

"When John Baliol died in 1269, Devorgilla, his wife, had his dear heart embalmed and enshrined in a coffer of ivory, enamelled and bound with silver bright, which was placed before her daily in her hall as her sweet silent com-

panion. At her death she desired the relic to be laid upon her heart, when sleeping in the New Abbey which she caused to be built. Hence it received the name of Sweetheart Abbey."

These monks of old always chose good sites, knowing that they would have a long time in which to admire the surrounding scenery, but never did they hit on one more beautiful than that of Devorgilla's Abbey of the Heart.

Under the lee of great green Criffel it lies, almost within spying distance of Loch Kinder. The sea swept close enough up to carry the holy brethren their salt and spice—shall we say? Yet it is far enough away not to fret them overmuch with its wintry blasts. There is nothing pleasanter even now than to wander through the kirkyard, across the cornfields, down the side of a mossy wall and so by little fords and white cottages up an opposite brae-face, all be-brambled and purple in the right season, till you look down on what is (take it for all in all) the most beautifully situated ruin in Scotland.

Dulce Cor owes its charm partly to the rosy colour of its stone, mellow as a page of monkish vellum illuminated in gold and blue. The centuries have only rendered it more and more harmonious. The thousand suns and rains have wrought together to make this handiwork of pious men seem, even in ruin, like the breathing of an unspoken prayer.

While in New Abbey, I have always a feeling that it is the Sabbath day. Not indeed a Sabbath to be feared. Rather the hush of a sweet peace seems to lie on the white cottages of the winding street, on the manse nestling amongst its trees—and yonder, lo! the good doctor coming down the road lifts his hand at sight of me with something of kindly benediction!

It is good to be here. The world which is too much with us, is for a time shut out;—though doubtless those who live always beside the Abbey have another tale to tell. Such, however, was the impression of a wanderer, who will keep

THE TOWERS OF DULCE COR

To face p. 100

in his heart a memory of fair days and quiet nights, of cornfields with the dew on the stooks, of the mouths of children stained purple with blackberrying—and over all, constant as the everlasting hills (aidful too, as the Psalmist says) the rosy towers of Dulce Cor, refreshing the heart at every turn of the road and every glimpse caught of them from the village street—a God's city set on a hill which cannot be hid.

The World too much with us.

There is much to see at New Abbey, apart from the Abbey itself. There are, for instance, the delightful woodland walks. Never have I seen such a choice of trees all about—great trunks of ash and beech, the rustle of ancient woods, pines in which the blue tits creak and the squirrels chatter unseen, younger growths pushing out fresh greenery close above your head, and down by the shore the heavy overloaded foliage of oaks, leaning a little to the earth as if weary of ancestral dignity.

Nevertheless at every hundred yards you come on the heather pushing up among the roots of the trees, or a vista opens out far away across the Solway. You see the glitter of silver water in midchannel, or the grey and dun stretches of the tideless flats. Yonder, you are told, is historic Caerlaverock far over the estuary, lonely on its green shore. A turn of the path and Loch Kinder lies beneath you, blue in the hollow of Criffel, a pool of moss water caught in a fold of his ample cloak, so lonely that, save for the ring of a hammer in the granite quarries above or the cry of a passing whaup high overhead, you cannot hear anything at all, except the short clipping clatter of the wavelets on its pebbles.

Above all rises Criffel, simple, restful, hardly beautiful, yet somehow harmonious too—a molehill made majestic by size.

There is one demon in this Paradise, and against him I pronounce the Greater Excommunication. He is the putter-up of barbed-wire fences. However, his fate is written. I

have made inquiries, and I have the highest local ecclesiastical authority (that of a fellow-sufferer) for saying that his future will be as uncomfortable as his own barbed wire, heated seven times in the furnace, can make it—be he landlord who permits, factor who orders, or farmer who profits by this engine of devilry. Anathema Maranatha! This is pronounced for Doom.

Barbed Wire.

NEW ABBEY

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KIRKBEAN SHORE

CHAPTER V

DOUGLAS HALL

THERE are many and charming ups and downs, "heighs and howes" on the shore road—that which follows the windings of the Solway out of Kirkbean into Colvend. At the village of Kirkbean itself, dainty, white, clambered over with Virginia creeper and the small white Ayrshire rose, you can turn sharp down to Carsethorn—a hamlet on a somewhat unkindly shore, where, as is probable, you must hail the sea afar off, and take your meals—such as you have brought with you—in an uncomfortable boarded shelter. But Carsethorn is saved from the utterly commonplace by the pre-

sence of an old-fashioned coastguards' station, recalling the ancient days when, on every such little whitewashed watch tower along the coast, there was a man on the look-out, his spyglass directed towards the dim haze which was the Isle of Man, out of which he expected to see emerge the dark hull and huge sail of Captain Yawkins' famous lugger.

Leaving Kirkbean and going westward, you have Southerness or in common speech "Satterness" to the left—just a white cottage or two and a little fairy lighthouse, gleaming tremulous through the moisture which the sun is raising from the wet sands.

So by a road abhorred of charioteers, but a Paradise for artists, camera-folk, and blackberry-questing bairns, you now approach the true Solway, and the cliffs and beaches of Douglas Hall. There are villas and houses about, which doubtless I should like well enough if I lived in any of them. But they look out of keeping, somehow—a little Englishy and pretentious, to one who can never think of Douglas Hall save as one or two thatched cottages, mixed with casual stables and cowsheds, and all arranged as if sprinkled from a pepper-caster.

Isle Rathan.

But now is the time and here is the place for a confession. Those who have seen Isle Rathan know well enough that, though there is a cave upon it, there is not room in that actual cavern for all the wonderful things which happened to Patrick Heron and his May Mischief. But then a romancer has powers. He can contract a coastline. He can enable a herd of "nowt beasts" to march thirty or forty rough miles in a couple of days. He can even regulate astronomy and have two new moons in one month —if he only disguises the facts somewhat, spices them with adventure, and, above all, sugar-coats them with a little love-making.

So then—I confess it—there is part of the coast of Douglas Hall in the Isle Rathan of "The Raiders"; while as for the Dry Cave and its double entrance, the author went

THE COAST NEAR DUMFRIES

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to Ireland for that, and wrote those chapters in a cove a little to the left of the Giant's Causeway, w' 'he Dry Cave opens

PORTOWARREN

out to the Sea Cave in the exact manner told in the book. So let those who go to Isle Ratlan not expect too much exactitude of description.

They will not, however, be disappointed in Douglas Hall. Here, plain to see, are the Needle's E'e and the Piper's Cove. While in the main Patrick Heron's description holds good

THE NEEDLE'S E'E

to-day—that is, when the lapse of two hundred years is taken into consideration, together with the fact that the writer was under no particular obligation to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"The cliffs rise so high above that, seen from beneath, they hold up the sky as on pillars. As we steered our way carefully into the mouth of the cave, we passed through

floating balls of sea-spume so large that the prow of the boat was whitened with them. I have often taken them in my hands, chasing them, as puppies do, along the shore when the wind comes in off the sea.[1]

"The rock is infinitely worn all about into myriad holes and crevices, in which are sea-pinks with dry, flaky heads. I saw tansy also far above, yellow like fire, and on the sheltered crannies, where a little earth collects and the birds leave castings, there was some parched sea-grass, and I think that I caught the pale-blue glint of the sea-holly—a favourite plant of mine. Then out of the depths of the great cave burst a clamorous cloud of rock pigeons. As we entered we could hear their voices *peep-peeing* and chunnering to their young, some of the old cock-birds meanwhile *roo-hooing* on the higher ledges with a sound wonderfully varied and pleasant. There were also at the entrance a few solitary maids and bachelors sitting in the clefts sunning themselves with drooping wings, like barn-door hens in the dust. Some were preening their feathers, the sheen on their necks being the redder because at that moment the sun was rising.

"The arched cliff that is called the Needle's E'e is within fifty feet of it, and the reverse suction of the sea pouring past Rathan sets through the Needle's E'e in a jumping jabble at every turn of the tide. It is thus easily found. The only caution is that it must not be mistaken for the Caloman Cave, or Pit of Pigeons (as the word means in the Pictish speech of ancient Galloway), which has its entrance high among the rocks and allows no opportunity for the breaching of the sea waves. So by going to the place it is easy to prove the exact truth of this history. This I say at length, lest any should think that the cave is some wonderful thing. For the glosing of the common people has raised a great number of legends in the countryside—as that, when we were besieged in this cave by the Black Smugglers, we escaped inland by the space of three or four miles, and came out by an under-

The Needle's E'e.

[1] "The Raiders," p. 103. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

ground passage at the Old Pict's Tower of Orchardton, with other stories that have no truth in them. Indeed, the whole cavern, as it was known to us, did not extend more than two hundred yards in all its turns and windings, entrances and passages."

ABOVE KIPPFORD

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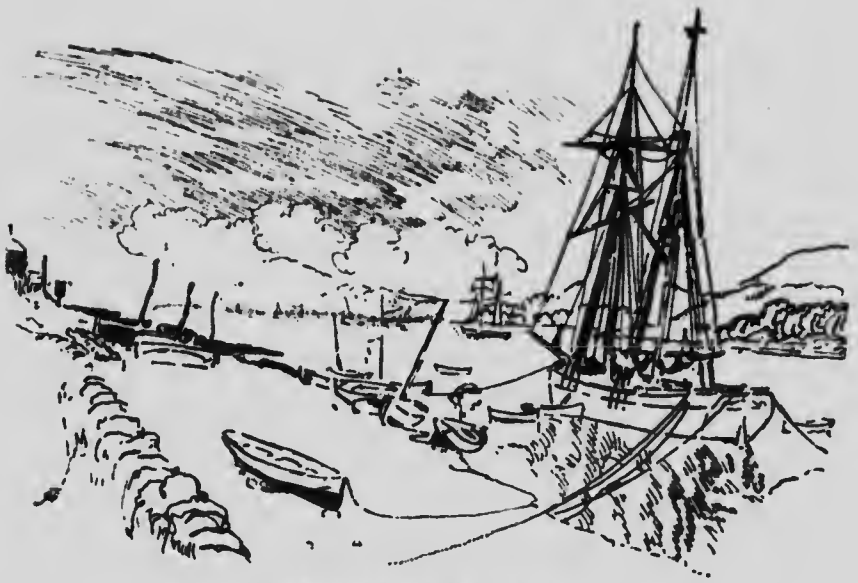
To face p. 109



THE HARBOUR, KIPPFORD

CHAPTER VI

COLVEND

"THE RIDDLINGS OF CREATION"

THE Hinterland of this Paradise of cave and arch and grotto is the parish of Colvend, or as the Galloway folk like to say, lovingly softening their voices to the sound of a dove cooing (even as Patrick Heron heard them), "Co'en"—they call it "the Co'en shore"—quite forgetting the big wild parish which lies behind that narrow fringe of white foam and blue sea.

The last time I set eyes on Colvend (this seaboard parish which looks across to Cumberland) was when, dreaming over the writing of "The Raiders," I stood alone on the hoary scalp of Criffel. The whaups circled about me as I looked towards the more fertile holms of the North.

High on Criffel.

"*Troqueer!*" they cried, "*Troqueer! Troqueer! We were better there than here.*" And yet I am not sure that the

whaups were right. For nobler is the wild red deer of the mountains, braying his challenge from hilltop to hilltop through the mist, than the lowing of myriads of kine knee-deep in fat pasture-lands.

As I stood thus, correcting my boyish memories of twenty years before, the phrase which stands at the head of this chapter rose into my mind—"The Riddlings of Creation."

"That's it," said I; "the very thing."

Other places and parishes have been so called, I know, but here in Co'en surely the Almighty made a bigger bing and used a wider mesh to His riddle. Some indeed there be who say that here the "boddom fell oot o' the wecht a'thegither!" Whether they are right or no, I cannot say.

There is, for example, Minnigaff—crowned king of all the moor parishes of Galloway, and, as I think, of Scotland. There is, truth to tell, routh of "riddlings" in Minnigaff. Yet Kells also runs it hard. Girthon is green with bracken and purple with heather for many a mile, but for varied wildness and a certain saucy defiance, characteristic also of its maidens, Co'en cowes them a'.

I cannot, indeed, write about Colvend, or indeed about any of the "Ten Parishes" east of the Water of Urr, as I can of my own country, being by birth and breeding a lad of the Dee. But for five or six years it was my lot to spend a considerable part of every summer there. I stayed sometimes at the house of a distant family connection, who was the farmer of a place which I shall call the Bourtree Buss. Robert Armstrong (that was not his name either) was already an old man when I knew him, but he was still fresh and hearty, with a stalwart family scattered all over the world. His wife was master, however—a tall, gaunt woman, apparently clothed in old corn sacks, and with a poke bonnet you could have stabled a horse in—a woman terrible to me as Fate. For in those days, strange as it may seem now, I had in me not infrequently the conscience of an evil-doer.

Bourtree Buss.

"Sic a laddie for eatin' as I never saw. The only thing he has nae stammock for, that I ken o'—is wark."

This was spoken of one of her own grandsons, my companion, but I knew well that I was under the same ban. I shall not soon forget how she used to roust us out of our warm beds about half-past four in the morning, and set us to carry water from the well—"to give us an appetite." She need not have troubled.

"Are ye weel?" she would say in a pipe like that of a boatswain, at the foot of the stable ladder.

"Aye."

"Then rise."

That she "likit the beds made an' a' things trig by breakfast-time" was a favourite phrase of hers. At Bourtree Buss breakfast was at six, dinner at twelve, so there was plenty of time between to "fin' the grunds o' your stammock." By noon that organ seemed as vast and as empty as the blue vault of heaven.

The guidman used to lend me his great three-decker spy-glass with "Dollond, 1771, London," engraved on it in quaint italics, cautioning me to "slip oot at the back and no let the mistress see ye. She disna like things ta'en frae 'boot the hoose."

Then, it is sad to have to relate, if by any process whatsoever, not excluding actual breach of the eighth commandment, we could obtain a "soda scone" or two, and a whang of cheese, we were supremely happy. The reader may be very sure that, having located the "auld woman," we kept the bieldy side of a dyke till well out of her reach.

More than once, however, the mistress of Bourtree Buss caught us redhanded, when, as a natural consequence, the sides of our heads rang for ten minutes.

Nevertheless her bark was a good deal worse then her bite, for I never remember that she took the stolen provender away from us.

"Be guid bairns," was ever her parting salute, "and dinna

bide awa' late, haein' us seekin' the hill for ye, an' thinkin' ye hae fa'en over the heuchs aboot the Coo's Snoot!"

Once free of the farm buildings and across the narrow crofts, we came out suddenly upon the great heathery hillsides, or we went farther afield till we would find ourselves among the tall headlands, with the wind whistling in our teeth and the telescope laid accurately on some sloop or schooner beating up the Solway or making a long tack to avoid the deadly pea-soup of Barnhourie Sands, while above we watched the mists lift off the Cumberland hills.

The whole coast grew familiar to me in those warm days of highest summer. I cannot remember ever having been tired. Yet from the heuchs above Port-o'-Warren, I can recall walking as far as Satterness and back in a day, no doubt ranging all the time up hill and down dale like a questing collie, and making the road three times as long as it need have been. We had, of course, no stiver of silver in any of our pockets, but that was no "newance." We had still, however, some "mullins" in our jacket "pooches"—and we discovered that soorocks to suck are but a moderate relief when one is hungry.

On the beach of the Scaur we found a gruff-looking old salt painting a boat, and, boy-like, fell into talk with him. He called us, I remember, "idle, regairdless loons," and asked us if we had ever done a good honest day's work in our lives.

"If he had us on his boat he would learn us to gillravage athort the kintra screevin' the verra soles off our boots!"

Then after this prelude he commanded us to follow him. We did follow, as it were, afar off, for we knew not to what fate he was conducting us. It might be to durance vile as vagrants, or even to the rope's end he had so frequently promised us.

But the kindly tar only threw open his cottage door with a "Hey, guidwife, here's twa lads that hae walkit frae the Bourtree Buss ower the Heuchs. Hae ye ocht ye can gie them to fill their kytes?"

COLVEND SHORE

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Ah, good Captain Wullie o' the Scaur—I ken not whether ye be in the land of the living or wandering in the shades of the dead. But if the latter, I pray that some kind spirit may meet you by the way and throw open as friendly a door and as handsomely welcome you in to eternal light and rest. Captain Wullie.

Mostly, however, it was to the deep gullet of Port-o'-Warren and the wider surf-beaten rift of Portling that we confined ourselves. And though I have not set eyes on either of these for five and twenty years, I can see in my mind's eye every turn and twist of the coast-line, every clean-bitten gap in the brown rocks, every tangle of green weed and purple tress of dulse between Port-o'-Warren and Douglas Hall. And if there be finer and more varied coast scenery within the same space anywhere, I, for one, have yet to see it. The dancing sea—out and in of which we were all day dipping like gulls, never very wet and never very dry—the white towns of the English North Country with their smoke blowing out over the Solway, the hoarse roar of the tide swiftly covering the Satterness Sands, the clean, hard beaches at the Needle's E'e and the Piper's Cove, these are worth many provinces in Cathay—to me, at least, as a Gallovidian and a romancer.

Of the black deeps of the Piper's Cove I have a tale to tell. Once upon a day my co-rapscallion and I, questing from Bourtree Buss, entered it. Brave was not the word for us—we were heroes. Others had been "feared." We would never be. It was all nonsense about the devil being up there. Ghosts did not exist. We would show them if they meddled us.

Cautiously, and hand in hand, we advanced.

Soon after we had left the light behind us, and the walls had closed in solid as the centre of the earth, Rob thought he heard a noise.

"Only the water," said I to reassure him.

"Suppose the tide comes in in a hurry!" he suggested, "it micht be that."

I laughed at the idea. The tide only came in once in twelve hours, half-an-hour later each time. It said so in the geography, or at least something like that.

But, all the same, there *was* a sound—a low, heart-chilling murmur—and it was decidedly growing louder as we advanced.

"Strike a match!" cried Rob.

We had been keeping these for the inner depths of the cave, but all plans must give way in the face of imminent danger.

The first one sputtered and went out.

The second showed all too plainly the veritable lineaments of Satan: burning eyes, black face, horns and all—yes, horns black and curly.

At the sight of the light something flew at us with a hoarse grunt.

The match went out, and my companion rushed past me down the passage, crying out with all his might, "It's him! It's the de'il! If I win aff this time, as sure as daith I'll never steal my granny's sody-scones again."

Yet, after all, it was no more than a black-faced "tip" which had wandered down from the heuchs and had got tangled and bemazed in the cave-mouth. I rallied my comrade bravely on his terror—though, Heaven knows, I was as frightened as ever he could have been.

"Did ye think I was feart?" Bob asked in great indignation. "Man, I was juist leadin' him oot to get a whack at him in the open."

It will be no astonishment to those who read this story that my early friend of the Piper's Cove succeeded in business. There is nothing like having an excuse ready.

It was long after this day, when I was a lad of fifteen, that I spent two of the happiest months of my life at Roughfirth with the only thorough comrade I have ever had. Our paths have diverged very wide and far, but I doubt not at the day's ending we shall meet again at the braefoot, and stroll

NEAR KIPPFORD

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quietly home together in the gloaming as we used to do of yore. Loyal, generous, brave, open-hearted Andrew—not many had such a friend, and what he was then he is to-day.

The story of our adventures (with some additions) you may read in the island chapters of "The Raiders." Even thus we lived and fought and "dooked," and made incursions and excursions in search of provisions—being ironically "on the rocks," alike for the sinews of war and as to a daily supply of the staff of life.

"With additions," say I. Yes, and with "substractions" too, as we used to call them at school. For I have another confession to make. In the interests of art I deliberately libelled a good and kind friend. It was not May Mischief who brought us the noble beef-steak pie to Isle Rathan—though there were two or three girl cousins not far off, as mischievous and almost as pretty as May. (I wonder if certain staid mothers of families remember how they and we used to race down Mark Hill behind the little hamlet of Roughfirth, which was then our temporary home! But this is a manifest digression.)

A Friend in Need.

It was not May Mischief, I say, who brought us the pie. It was my friend's lady mother, who, in the hour of our need, one sad Saturday when our credit was completely exhausted at the "shop," brought us the delight of her bonny face and comfortable figure, and—what I regret to say seemed even better—the noblest pie that hungry teeth ever crumped the paste of.

Nor did she pursue us all over the Isle with threats and alarms of war. On the contrary, she sat down on a chair and said, with her hands on her knees—

"Oh, that waggonette! I declare, I'm a' shooken sindry! Noo, hoo muckle siller can ye laddies be doin' wi'?"

Andrew and I looked at each other. We could have "dune" with about a hundred pounds, but we compromised for thirty shillings. Even this was a stretch.

"And I dinna ken what I'll say to your faither when I get hame!" she said as she handed over the dollars.

Blessed thought, we were solvent again, and could look even the "shop" in the face!

Good friend and kind, across the years I salute you. Your "other son" has not forgotten you, and hereby sends his love to you, and makes his all too belated apology.

HIGH TIDE NEAR THE SCAUP

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CHAPTER VII

DALBEATTIE

THE little Town of Granite has seen many vicissitudes in its short life. Time was and may be again when all about Craignair, and far along the road towards Barnbarroch, the sound of the blasting shot was continually heard. The quarries roared with traffic. River craft could not carry away the "setts" fast enough to pave the streets of Liverpool. Houses—lodgings even—were not to be got, and quarrymen slept in rude shelters and bothies beside their tools.

Then again Dalbeattie was almost as a City of the Dead—very like one indeed, with its tall granite columns, rising here and there in the half-deserted polishing works—tombstones made on "spec," waiting for the day when some notability would die, and a fulsome inscription be cut upon that smooth tablet. Now in the granite town there is a pleasant betwixt-and-between of prosperity, the "neither poverty nor riches" so desired of the Psalmist, however unwelcome to the stirring man of affairs.

The Town of Granite.

There is not much to see in Dalbeattie itself, except one of the cleanest and most pleasant little towns in Scotland, a navigable river, very like a Dutch canal, a ridgy hill which from a distance seems to have exploded volcanically, like Krakatoa or the Japanese Bandai-san. There are, however, many pleasant walks, wooded and quiet. Above all there is an admirable hazel-wood a little way along the line-side towards Castle-Douglas. The nuts are ripe about the time of the Castle-Douglas September Fair, and you will probably be chased out by the keepers. Only on occasion did

I quite escape their vigilance. The best way is to run for the railway line, get over the fence and make faces at them. If the surfacemen inquire who you are, remember to say that you are the son (or other immediate relative) of the Traffic Superintendent. These very practical points are added in order to increase the usefulness of the book. Mr. William Maxwell, of the Glasgow *Scotsman* office, will bear me witness that they proved most valuable in our time. Thus from generation to generation pearls of information are passed on. And if we seniors can add to their happiness by a little thing like that, the rising generation will surely call us blessed.

Be sure, however, that you can run faster than the keeper. This is most important.

Northward again, you have the Urr, a pooly, trouty, rippling, unexpected sort of a stream, half a burn grown up, half a river grown small. If you care for fishing, as I do not (save in connection with the frying-pan) you will find fish therein. They run small, or rather did thirty years ago. But you can generally catch them with the fat stubbly ones which you find under flat stones at the back of the cow-house. It is best to go very early in the morning, and have a good many spare hooks along your line, getting home before breakfast time, so as to avoid remark. Any further information can be obtained from my friend Andrew Clark Penman of Dumfries. If you start about 3 A.M. and get back for breakfast, it is not night poaching, and you get off with a reprimand. It is unnecessary to carry a fishing-basket. A pair of deep side pockets to your coat—inside—will be found to be much more useful. If you use a net, always take out the little thorn bushes which the keepers put in the bottoms of the pools. This shows carefulness on your part, and gives the poor labouring man something to do the next day.

There is also a sport called fly-fishing, but Penman and I don't know anything about that. All our offences are long since covered by the Statute of Limitations.

Then within a morning's walk of Dalbeattie there is the

LOOKING OUT TO SEA

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Cloak Moss, a famous place for wild birds' eggs. With a little care you need never be hungry there between the middle of March in a good year and the end of June. The method of cookery is simple. First you find your nest—plover, curlew, snipe, according to your luck. Then you ascertain (by trial) whether the egg is fresh. Then—but what comes after that the reader must find out for himself, and afterwards teach it to his grandmother.

It was among the wild, bouldery fastnesses at the back of the Cloak Moss that a certain bet was settled, on the way to Tarkirra, that remarkable hostelry, of which all trace has long since passed away from off the face of the moorlands.

A Feathered Wager.

It is worth while, however, ascending the wild benty hillside of Barclosh, and so over the trembling green bogs of the Knock Burn, to see "where the grey granite lies thickest," even though no more does the reek of any unlicensed "kiln," or whiskey-still, steal up the face of the precipice, mingling faintly blue with the heather and bent.

The wager about which kind of bird a pair of travellers will see the most of, was really tried on the Colvend shore road one pleasant May morning when all the feathered folk were busy about their affairs, and with the exact result indicated below. It is a game which two can always play, and has been found to lighten a long weary road wonderfully—next best, indeed, to the telling of tales, or (so I am informed) the making of love.

Here is the incident as related in "The Dark o' the Moon"[1]:—

"'Settle it, Maxwell Heron,' he cried, making his pony passage and champ the bit as it was his pride to do. (He was practising to show off before the schoolmaster's Toinette, as tricksome a minx as ever flirted a Spanish fan.) 'Maxwell Heron, you never had the instinct of a right gentleman in ye, man. Here are five silver shillings—cover them wi' other five. There ye are! Now, what bird that flies the air, think

[1] Macmillan & Co.

ye, will we see the oftenest between here and Barnbarroch Mill Wood? "The shilfy" (chaffinch), says you. Then, to counter you, and bring the wager to the touch—I'm great wi' the black coats—I'll e'en risk my siller on the craw.[1] He's the Mess John amang a' the birds o' the air!'

"So we rode along in keen emulation, and as we went I made a list of the birds we encountered. When there was no doubt, and we both agreed, I pricked a mark after the name of each we saw. At the Faulds of the Nitwood the mavis led by a neck from my friend the 'shilfy.' But there, as ill-luck would have it, we encountered a cloud of rooks making merry about a craw-bogle which had been set up to scare them off some newly-sown land. Jasper shouted loud and long. The siller, he maintained, was already his. I had as lief hand it over. I told him to bide a wee—all was not over yet.

"Now, I began to remark, that while the chaffinch and the sparrow, the robin, and his swarthy rookship occurred in packs and knots and clusters, there was one bird which had to be pricked off regularly and frequently. This was the swift (or black swallow). Whether it was that his long elastic wings and smooth swoopings brought the same bird more than once across our vision, or simply because every barn and outhouse sheltered a couple, it was not long before it was evident that both Jasper and I had small chance of heading the poll with our favourites. By the time we had gotten to the Moss of the Little Cloak, and left the woodlands behind us for that time, the prickings of my pencil had totalled as follows:—The swift (or black swallow), 74 ticks; the chaffinch or shilfy, 46 ticks; the cushy doo or wood pigeon, 38 ticks; the craw or field rook, 37 ticks; the magpie, 23 ticks; the mavis, 19 ticks. And this, though mightily uninteresting to most folk that read or hear tales, is yet of value. For it tells what birds were most plentiful in our Galloway woodlands on a certain May morning in the year of grace 17—."

And so, having settled this matter, the travellers went on by the wild benty hillside of Barclosh, and over the trembling

[1] Craw: used in the south of Scotland of the rook.

AT THE SCAUR

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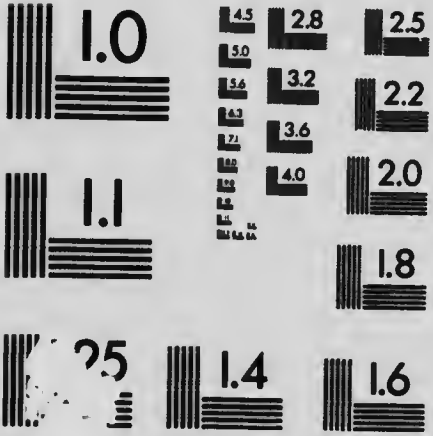

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green bogs of the Knock Burn, straight as an arrow for Tarkirra, that curiously-named place of public entertainment among the muirlands, "where the grey granite boulders lie thickest, and the reek of the unlicensed 'kiln' steals most frequently up the face of the precipice."

THE BUCHAN

CHAPTER VIII

CASTLE-DOUGLAS

LITTLE town, once built at the foot of a hill and ever since running a race up it—I do not know whether you are very proud of me, but at any rate I am proud of you.

To me you are still "the toon"—*my* town. I came to you as a boy, and found in you the best of schoolmasters, the best of schoolmates, the snellest, sharpest-tongued, kindliest-hearted folk in the world. If ever I have written concerning you that which seemed to make for mirth, the laughter was noways unkindly. And then, you know, all that I have said of you is sugar-stick and dropped honey by the side of the reports of your School Board meetings as given in the "K. A.," which I so faithfully read—in order to see what the "Raiders" of old

said to one another just before they drew their quarter-staves and fell to the head-breaking.

I have spoken with those who remember you altogether at the brae-foot, only flinging one arm up Little Dublin and another along Marle Street towards the Loch. You were then that village of Causewayend, which Sheriff Gordon of Greenlaw, who carted his marle along that street, says was founded by himself, and not (as has always been understood) by Sir William Douglas of Gelston Castle.[1] **Causeway-end.**

In my own time, life centred about the Cross, and so continued during all my life as a schoolboy. But ever since, contrary to all the laws of gravitation, the town has been rushing faster and ever faster up hill, apparently to get a sniff of the cattle-marts of a Monday, and to see the white smoke of the trains coming and going about the junction the rest of the week.

But I cannot hope to say much wisely of the town as it is. It has grown quite away from me. However, it contains the best hotel in the south of Scotland, the *Douglas Arms*, where the most kindly thoughtfulness has long been traditional. Here the traveller will find the best of horses to carry him on a score of interesting excursions, and the best of good cheer to return to at his day's ending.

Castle-Douglas, which I knew as a village, has grown into the "emporium" from which the most part of Galloway supplies itself. Its position makes it a natural centre for the traveller. It has the advantages, as well as the disadvantages of prosperity. It is neat, clean—a proper town, in every sense. The houses wear a smiling aspect. They know that they are well built and able to bring in good money to the fortunate owners. The shops, though noways garish, have the look of steady-paying customers and excellent connections. The churches are large, well filled, well manned, advancing, zealous in all good works, and, as of old—well able to speak out their opinions of each other.

[1] See Chapter xxxii., "A Galloway Laird in the Eighteenth Century."

But in spite of all I love the village that was, even more than the prosperity that is. Still, however, there are links with the past—my old minister, my old Sunday School teacher (neither yet old in years), a companion or two looking out from shop-doors at which I used to see their fathers and uncles. But once outside the clean bright little town, always busked like a bride—there the world is as I knew it. The Loch, indeed, can never have the charm for others it has for me. For I left it in time. I had no need to grow weary of the quiet glades of the Lovers' Walk, and the firry solitudes of the Isle Wood. The Fair Isle (my "Belle-Ile-en-Mer") remains fair as ever for me. On the blackest night of stars I could push a borrowed canoe (what an optimist was the lender!) through the lily-studded lanes and backwaters between the Fair Isle and Gelston Burn. Perhaps the lanes and paths we clove with hatchet and gardening knife, through the tangled brushwood of the small Isles, exist to this day—perhaps not.

The Village that was.

Still woodland glades, peeps of the little town across glassy stretches of water, a haunting murmur of birds, and the most perfect solitude to dream and work in—that was the Lovers' Walk. And is, I believe, unto this day.

Carlinwark is hardly a loch. I have heard it called a duck-pond. Well, if so, blessed be the ducks that swim in that pearl of ponds. I have crossed Ladoga, and seen less of beauty than you may see by walking open-eyed from the foot of the Lovers' Walk to the Clachan of Buchan. Open-eyed, I say. For all depends on that.

There was a tree, a silver-birch, which grew upon a point near the little grassy islet which fronts the Fair Island on its eastern side. We, the boys of twenty-five years ago, loved it. We sketched it after the manner of MacWhirter. We wrote odes to it. Mine I even printed. It was "Our Lady of the Woods." One day it chanced that the wandering trio who did all these things, came on a fourth youth also regarding the beautiful white birch. There was a kind of reverent joy

CASTLE-DOUGLAS, FROM CARLINWARK

on his face. Our hearts warmed to the fellow. Hitherto we had not thought highly of his mental powers. Perhaps, after all, we were mistaken.

"That's a bonny tree," he said, seeing us also gazing up at it.

"Yes," we cried, rejoicing as the angels do over a soul saved, "we think it is the loveliest thing all about the loch."

"Aye," he said, "I was just thinkin' the same—*it wad make grand clog-bottoms!*"

He was a clogger! And, alas, he cast the evil eye on "Our Lady of the Woods." To clog-bottoms she came at long and last. She was laid low in the great windstorm of December 1883, just at the time when the dust from the Krakatoa outburst was reddening the skies of the world. Then I wrote another ode upon her.

Carlinwark.

Hardly from anywhere about the streets of Castle-Douglas, and from nowhere that I know of about Carlinwark Loch, can Thrieve Castle be seen. Yet though forgotten by the new, Thrieve was once the centre of all the south—one might almost say of all Scotland.

Go out by the foot of King Street, and ascending Carlinwark hill, you will soon be able to look across the bogs and marshy meadows to the grey keep rising out of the river a couple of miles away. Once on a time the gallantest hearts in Scotland came riding over these wastes. Across the drawbridge of yonder castle, and so over this very hill of Carlinwark, they came daily to the forge of Malise M'Kim, the mighty smith of the Three Thorns.

It is written of William,[1] the splendid young sixth Earl of Douglas and third Duke of Touraine, how "upon his horse Black Darnaway he rode right into the saffron eye of the sunset. On his left hand Carlinwark and its many islets burned rich with spring-green foliage, all splashed with the golden sunset light. Darnaway's well-shod hoofs sent the diamond drops flying, as, with obvious pleasure, he trampled through the shallows. Ben Gairn and Screel, boldly ridged against

[1] "The Black Douglas," p. 15. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

the southern horizon, stood out in dark amethyst against the glowing sky of even, but the young rider never so much as turned his head to look at them.

"Presently, however, he emerged from among the noble lakeside trees, upon a more open space. Broom and whin-blossom clustered yellow and orange beneath him, garrisoning with their green spears and golden banners every knoll and scaur. But there were broad spaces of turf here and there on which the conies fed, or fought terrible battles for the meek ear-twitching does, "spat-spatting" at each other with their forepaws, and springing into the air in their mating fury.

"William of Douglas reined up Darnaway underneath the whispering foliage of a great beech, for all at unawares he had come upon a sight that interested him more than the noble prospect of the May sunset.

"In the centre of the golden glade, and with all their faces mistily glorified by the evening light, he saw a group of little girls, singing and dancing as they performed some quaint and graceful pageant of childhood.

"Their young voices came up to him with a wistful, dying fall, and their slow, graceful movement of the rhythmic dance seemed to affect the young man strangely. Involuntarily he lifted his close-fitting feathered cap from his head, and allowed the cool airs to blow against his brow.

"'See the robbers passing by, passing by, passing by,
See the robbers passing by,
My fair lady!'

"The ancient words came up clearly and distinctly, and softened his heart with the indefinable and exquisite pathos of the refrain whenever it is sung by the sweet voices of children.

"'These are surely but cotters' bairns,' he said, smiling a little at his own intensity of feeling, 'but they sing like little angels. I dare say my sweetheart Magdalen is amongst them.'

"And he sat still listening, patting Black Darnaway meanwhile on the neck.

"'What did the robbers do to you, do to you, do to you,
What did the robbers do to you,
My fair lady?'

"The first two lines rang out bold and clear. Then again the wistfulness of the refrain played upon his heart as if it had been an instrument of strings, till the tears came into his eyes at the wondrous sorrow and yearning with which one voice, the sweetest and purest of all, replied, singing quite alone:

"'They broke my lock and stole my gold,
Stole my gold, stole my gold,
My fair lady!'

"But the young earl, recovering himself, soon found what he had come to seek. Malise Kim, who by the common voice was well named 'The Brawny,' sat in the wicker chair before his door, overlooking the island-studded, fairy-like loch of Carlinwark. In the smithy across the green bare-trodden road, two of his elder sons were still hammering at some armour of choice. But it was a ploy of their own, which they desired to finish that they might go trig and point-device to the earl's weapon-showing to-morrow on the braes of Balmaghie. Sholto and Laurence were the names of the two who clanged the ringing steel and blew the smooth-handled bellows of rough-tanned hide, which wheezed and puffed as the fire roared up deep and red, before sinking to the right welding-heat, in a little flame round the buckle-tache of the girdle-brace they were working on."

A little farther along the Carlinwark road, and you will come to the outlet of the canal, which was constructed to convey Sheriff Gordon's marle to the sea (*v.* chap. xxxii., "An Eighteenth Century Galloway Laird"). You would never imagine that it was made to carry field manure. Clear

and slumberous under its great trees it glides away, stray lights upon it dancing through the leaves, till it emerges upon the wide moss of Carlinwark, and becomes at once congested and stagnant. Still, occasionally in winter, one may see, upon some day of high flood in the river Dee, that peaceful canal pour a red and ridgy torrent into the loch, raising it in a few hours to the level of the road, putting half the islands under water, and altering the whole face of nature. I remember one joyous September fair-day, some thirty years ago, which we spent entirely in boats among the trees of the Isle Wood, discovering new continents, rescuing distressed damsels, and generally Crusoe-ing it to our hearts' content.

The hamlet of Buchan.

One must not leave behind the hamlet of Buchan with only a passing glance. It sits right picturesquely in a nook of the woods—the loch in front, Screel and Bengairn in the distance, though, I fancy, invisible save from the water's edge.

Then comes the Furbar, one of the oldest farms in Galloway, but to me memorable chiefly because two small boys in the later sixties used to carry milk therefrom to their respective families. The time it was winter. The mornings were cold. Throwing stones into the loch to break the ice was an agreeable youthful pastime. So one boy left his can by the roadside, while the other more prudently kept his by him as he threw. But on going back, the first can aforesaid, with the entire day's milk of a respectable family—was gone! Number One's father had passed on his morning walk—and taken the can home with him! It may well be believed that Number One had certain experiences when he appeared canless and milkless in his ancestral halls. For a long time afterwards he manifested a curious preference for a standing posture. But there was obviously a mystery somewhere which has never been quite cleared up.

SAINT NINIAN'S

CHAPTER IX

SCHOOL AND A KIRK

To the Boy-that-Was there is nothing within the Borough of Castle-Douglas so real and memorable as "John Cowper's School," an it were not the old Cameronian Kirk.

John Cowper was a true man and a great teacher. It is a common thing for his boys to say, when they forgather after a quarter of a century of the world's bustle and change, "Well, *I* never learned much after I left John Cowper's!"

John Cowper.

"Let it be thorough," he would say. "A little knowledge is all right—if you know it," he repeated over and over; "it's in the great lot of things that you *think* you know, but don't know, that the danger lies!" "Build on a good foundation, and the house will last your time!" was another of his sayings.

Though stern, and even on occasion severe, Mr. Cowper was a well-spring of tenderness—hidden and quiet, truly, but deep, true, and sincere.

"I loved Castle-Douglas," he used to say to me in his latest years, "I would never have left it, if I had been allowed to do my work as work ought to be done!" He was above all a fine classic scholar, and, I fear, never felt himself thoroughly at home in the Training College of his later life, where his work was that of lecturing upon English subjects. Perhaps I have something of the feeling for him that Carlyle had for his father, but John Cowper still seems to me to have been the man most fitted to influence boys and young men of any whom I have met with on the earth.

His old school still stands at the head of Cotton Street, and is now, I think, cut up into dwelling-houses. But when we, his pupils, pass that way we look at it reverently. For a good man spent the ripest twenty years of his life in it, and by the mouths of those whom he sent into the world out of that humble school-house, John Cowper, being dead, yet speaketh.

The old Cameronian kirk sits on a hill, and is surrounded by trees, a place both bieldy and heartsome. The only thing that the old-time Cameronians seriously felt the want of, was a burying-ground round about it. A kirk is never quite commodious and cheery without monuments to read, and "thruchs" upon which to sit and "ca' the crack." Now, however, they have made a modern church of it, and a steeple has been set down before it, for all the world as if Cleopatra's Needle had been added to the front wall of a barn. Nevertheless it is green with ivy all the year round, and in the summer the lilac blooms right up to where the elders stand at the plate.

But "Cairn Edward" Cameronian kirk has long been a gate of heaven. To many who in their youth have entered it, words heard there have proven the beginning of a new life and another world. Of old, as the morning psalm went upward in a grand slow surge, there was a sense of hallowed days in the very air.

"The Kirk on the Hill."

And to this day the Boy-that-Was has a general idea that the mansions of the New Jerusalem are of the barn class of architecture and whitewashed inside—which will not show so much upon the white robes when it rubs off as it used to do on plain earthly "blacks."

Few now living can remember the coming to Castle-Douglas of the Reverend William Symington, the first minister of the Kirk on the Hill whom I knew. He had come as a stripling, and was looked upon as the future high-priest of the sect in succession to his father, at that time minister of the largest city church in the denomination. Tall, erect, with flowing black hair that swept his shoulders, and the exquisitely chiselled face of some marble Apollo, William Symington was an ideal minister of the hill folk. His splendid dark eyes glowed with still and chastened fire, as he walked with his hands behind him and his head thrown back up the long aisle from the vestry.

His successor was a much smaller man, well set and dapper, who always wore black gloves when preaching, and who seemed to dance a benignant minuet under his spectacles as he walked. Alas! to him also came in due time the sore heart and bitter draught. They say in "Cairn Edward" that no man ever left that white church on the wooded knoll south of the town and was happier for the change. The leafy garden where many ministers have written their sermons has seemed to them a very paradise of peace in after years, and their cry has been, "Oh! why left I my hame?"

Manse Memories.

Concerning the present minister, because he is still with us, I have naturally no liberty of utterance. He and his have made that kirk and manse a place of memories gracious and grateful—of kindnesses of which no man can count the number, and of hospitality, bright, sweet, simple, and boundless. Theirs be the blessing of those whose life has been lived for others. One day they may find that they have entertained many angels unawares! Yet if this be a place for enshrining old gratitudes, I must of necessity put my thankfulness

to my old minister, George Laurie, and to the lady his wife, in the foremost place among those who are yet living. But, I repeat, that very fact restrains utterance, even when the heart is most full and willing.

There are others still among us of whom I would like to speak—my old Sunday School teacher first of all. I will not write his name, but I know that he is the same assured friend to-day as ever he was, a stand-by in trouble, firm in word and deed, faithful in warning, and full of the quiet dignity of a long life well and worthily lived.

Of those departed shapes which make the town a city of memories to me, I will only name two or three—Joseph Paterson, of the Apothecaries' Hall, faithful also in word and deed, diligent in business, sparing of words, not letting his right hand know what his left hand did. Over the street from him was Bailie John Payne—who, when a town's lad set off for college, was apt to beckon him into some mysterious entry, where he would say hastily, as if committing a felony, "Hae, boy, pit that in your pooch, and say naething aboot it!" Clearly, too, do I see, and much do I miss, the good grey head of Samuel Gordon. And even yet, sitting and writing these things far away, I cannot realise that that corner by the window of the old shop is not filled, and that the hearty hand of the bookseller will not be stretched out to me when next I enter.

There are many others, but time and the patience of those readers who knew them not, would fail me in telling of Dr. John Nivison, who first lent me a complete edition of Carlyle, lately dead in the flower of his age; of Dr. Walter Lorraine, wise, kindly, and humoursome, of whom the memory shall not soon die out; of Provost Richard Hewat; of George M'Kie of Dunjarg; and of Andrew Dobbie—all men of mark when for us the world was young.

It was a place full of many humours, few of them unpleasant, that little police borough of Castle-Douglas thirty years ago. Affairs were still managed semi-paternally, and on

the whole things went very well in the council of the fathers. No one knows the town, its history, or its quaint old-time characters half so well as Mr. Malcolm Harper, and I tell him once again that he owes it to his own literary skill, and also to his native land, to put together such a book of Galloway portraits and memories such as only he could write.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT

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A TYPICAL FARM NEAR KIRKCUDBRIGHT

CHAPTER X

KIRKCUDBRIGHT

A SCOTTISH village is a strangely circumscribed place. Within a radius, varying according to the width of ploughed land about it, everything is known with photographic particularity. A man cannot get shaved without its being publicly canvassed, and no words can express the minuteness with which the characters of women are studied. But once out of the radius of ploughmen who come to the smiddy to get their coulters sharpened, or their horses shod, out of the ken of the herds who descend whistling upon the village shops for flour and baking-soda, off the main roads by which the farmers and their spouses drive to the weekly market, and you are in a region about which nothing whatever is known or cared. A river may divide two parishes as completely in interests and acquaintance, in bargain-striking and love-making, as if it constituted the boundary of two

hostile countries. A mountain range or a stretch of wild heathery hills is a watershed of news not to be passed over.

OLD KIRKCUDBRIGHT

I have at last arrived at Kirkcudbright in my wanderings, and that is why I speak of the separations of Galloway rural

THE CASTLE

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life. I was a Castle-Douglas boy, yet I knew no one in Kirkcudbright only ten miles away. I could not have believed that there was any one in it worth knowing. The solitary schoolboy (Laurence Kay) who went daily from our town to Kirkcudbright Academy was looked upon as a kind of daring Stanley, familiar to an unholy degree with the "Darkest Africa" at the mouth of the Dee.

A Strange Land.

Even now I experience a pleasant foreign flavour when I visit the seat of county government. It is easy to do one's work there. As in a foreign land, there are not the frequent invasions of friends who cannot be denied. In the quaint and excellent Selkirk Arms, under Mrs. Carter's fostering care, I wrote some part of "The Lilac Sunbonnet." And there is a grateful slumberous quiet which rests the very soul about the bridge and the quay, or better still, along the Borgue Shore and by the sea-girt Ross.

I remember as a lad sitting dreaming on a seat by the sea-edge of St. Mary's Isle, a writing-block on my knee. An old gentleman came and sat down beside me. I put away my scribbling somewhat hastily, and the old gentleman, with the big worn leather patches on his shooting coat, asked me if I had been sketching.

"No," said I, "only trying to write——"

"Writing—ah, what?" he demanded abruptly.

"Verses," I answered, blushing. For at fifteen one blushes at everything.

"What are they about?" was the next question.

"Paul Jones," said I, "but I know very little about him."

"Read them to me."

I read. Happily I had not proceeded very far before I came to the end. The trial was short. The old gentleman smiled good-humouredly.

"Where did you get your information?" said he.

"Out of the 'History of Galloway'!"

"I think I can do better for you than that," he said, musing; "where are you staying?"

I told him. It was at a farm in the neighbourhood.

"Well, wait here a little," he said. "I will see what I can find."

He disappeared into the wood, and after twenty minutes or so he came back without his gun, but with two books under his arm.

"Here they are," he said; "you can keep them. I find I have another copy."

I declare that I was so much astonished that I forgot to thank him. But he understood, patted me on the shoulder, nodded, and said, smiling, "Good day to you."

"Who was that?" I asked of a gamekeeper who had been hovering in the offing during our second interview.

"'Who is that'?" he repeated after me in astonishment; "do you mean to tell me that ye dinna ken!"

"No, I don't," I said, "but anyway he is very kind. He gave me these two volumes of 'The Life of Paul Jones.'"

The man stood open-mouthed.

"The Yerl gied you thae twa books!—The Yerl——"

He could say no more, and I left him standing still with dropped jaw, unable to digest his astonishment.

I have the books still, and they bear the arms and autograph of the last Earl of Selkirk.

ON THE DEE, ABOVE KIRKCUDBRIGHT

CHAPTER XI

AUCHENCAIRN

It was concerning the little, bright, rose-bowered, garden-circled, seaside village of Auchencairn that I began my writing about Grey Galloway. "The Raiders," indeed, was written at Laurieston, in the heart of my own land. But all through the book, the cliffs and beaches of Isle Rathan, the woods of Balcary, and the little white village of Auchencairn kept coming and going.

If any traveller wants to see Auchencairn as I saw it in my day-dream, and as I had seen it a thousand times with the eye of flesh, he must of necessity visit Isle Rathan itself. But as this needs arrangement, he had better walk first to the Torr Point by the Red Haven. Then if he care at all for Galloway and the troubles of a certain Mr. Patrick Heron, he

will remember that it was concerning this place that that hardy adventurer wrote: "It was upon Rathan Head that I first heard their bridle-reins jingling clear. It was ever my custom to walk in the full of the moon at all times of the year. Now the moons of the months are wondrously different: the moon of January, serene among the stars; that of February, wading among chill cloud-banks of snow; of March, dun with the mist of muirburn among the heather; of early April, clean washen by the rains. This was now May, and the moon of May is the loveliest in all the year, for with its brightness comes the scent of flower-buds, and of young green leaves breaking from the quick and breathing earth.

"Rathan is but a little isle—indeed, only an isle when the tide is flowing. Except in the very slackest of the neaps there is always twice a day a long track of shells and shingle out from the tail of its bank. This track is, moreover, occasionally somewhat dangerous, for Solway tide flows swift, and the sands are shifting and treacherous. So we went and came for the most part by boat from the Scaur, save when I or some of the lads were venturesome, as afterwards when I got well acquaint with Mary Maxwell, whom I have already called May Mischief, in the days of a lad's first mid-summer madness.

"Here on the Isle of Rathan my father taught me English and Latin, Euclid's science of lines, and how to reason with them for oneself. He ever loved the mathematic, because he said even God Almighty works by geometry. He taught me also surveying and land measuring. 'It's a good trade, and will be in more request,' he used to say, 'when the lairds begin to parcel out the commonties and hill pastures, as they surely will. It'll be a better trade to your hand than keepin' the black-faced yowes aff the heuchs (cliffs) o' Rathan.'

Isle Rathan.

"It was a black day for me, Patrick Heron, when my father lay a-dying. I remember it was a bask morning in early spring. The tide was coming up with a strong drive of east wind wrestling against it, and making a clattering jabble all about the rocks of Rathan.

THE WATER FRONT

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"'Lift me up, Paitrick,' said my father, 'till I see again the bonny tide as it lappers against the auld Toor. It will lapper there mony and mony a day an' me no here to listen. Ilka time ye hear it, laddie, ye'll mind on yer faither that loved to dream to the plashing o't, juist because it was Solway salt water and this his ain auld Toor o' the Isle Rathan.'

"So I lifted him up according to his word, till through the narrow window set in the thickness of the ancient wall, he could look away to the Mull, which was clear and cold, but of a slaty blue that day—for, unless it brings the dirty white fog, the east wind clears all things.

"As he looked a great fishing gull turned its head as it soared, making circles in the air, and fell—a straight white streak cutting the cold blue sky of that spring day.

"'Even thus has my life been, Paitrick. I have been most of my time but a great gull diving for herring on an east-windy day. Whiles I hae gotten a bit flounder for my pains, and whiles a rive o' drooned whalp, but o' the rale herrin'—desperate few, man, desperate few.'"

Here, then, it was that all my boyish romance of the sea was wrought out. I own it. I am the dryest of dry-land sailors. The Channel is wide enough for me. I do not bless the narrow seas. By no means do I wish them a whole Atlantic broad.

But the sea as it washes into caves, and falls arching on sandy beaches or clatters against the worn foot of some far-regarding cliff, touches all the romantic in me.

So, the very first time I landed on Isle Rathan, coming as usual from the Scaur, I saw the book that should be written, and the tower, and Patrick Heron and his father living there alone. The herd's house with its silently playing children vanished, and I saw only the Rathan Tower on the sea edge much as years afterwards, even as it is described in "The Raiders."

"Now I must tell of the kind of house we had on the Isle

Rathan. It stood in a snug angle of the bay that curved inwards towards the land and looked across some mossy, boggish ground to a range of rugged, heathery mountains, on which there were very many grey boulders, about which the heath and bracken grew deep.

"The ancient house of the Herons of Rathan was not large, but it was very high, with only two little doors to back and front—the front one set into the wall, and bolted with great bars into the solid rock beneath and above, and into the thickness of the wall at either side. The back door opened not directly, but entered into a passage which led first to a covered well in a kind of cave, where a good spring of water for ever bubbled up with little sand grains dancing in it, and then by a branch passage to an opening among the heather of the isle, which you might search for all a summer's day. But unless you knew it of others' knowledge, you would never find it of your own. The windows were very far up the sides, and there were very few of them, as being made for defence in perilous times. Upon the roof there was a flagstaff, and so strong a covering of lead and stone flags that it seemed as though another tower might have been founded upon it. The Tower of Rathan stood alone, with all its offices, stables, byres, or other appurtenances far back under the cliff, the sea on one side of it, and on the other the heathery and rocky isle, with its sheep pastures on the height. Beneath the sea-holly and dry salt plants bloomed blue and pink down near the blatter of the sea.

"Fresh air and sound appetites were more common with us lads on the isle than the wherewithal to appease our belly cravings.

"Rathan Island itself lay in the roughest tumble of the seas. Its southern point took the full sweep of the Solway tides as they rushed and surged upwards to cover the great deadly sands of Barnhourie. From Sea Point, as we named it, the island stretched northward in many rocky steeps and cliffs riddled with caves. For just at this point the softer sandstone you meet with on the Cumberland shores set its nose out of

the brine. So the island was more easily worn into sea-caves and strange arches, towers and hay-stacks, all of sea-carved stone, sitting by themselves out in the tideway, for all the world like bairns' playthings.

"In these caves, which had many doors and entries, I had played about them ever since I was a boy.[1] I knew them all as well as I knew our own back-yard under the cliff.

"In fine weather it was a pleasant thing to go up to the highest point of the island, which, though little indeed of a mountain, was called Ben Rathan, and view the country all about one. Thence was to be seen the reek of many farm-towns and villages, besides cot-houses without number, all blowing the same way when the wind was soft and equal. The morning was the best time to go there. Upon Rathan, close under the sky, the bees hummed about among the short, crisp heather, which was springy just like our little sheltie's mane after my father had done docking it. There was a great silence up there—only a soughing from the south, where the tides of the Solway, going either up or down, kept for ever chafing against the rocky end of our little Isle of Rathan.

"Then nearest to us, on the eastern shore of Barnhourie Bay, there was fair to be seen the farmhouse of Craigdarroch,[2] with the Boreland and the Ingleston above it, which is always the way in Galloway. Wherever there is a Boreland you may be sure that there is an Ingleston not far from it. The way of that is, as my father used to say, because the English came to settle in their 'tons,' and brought their 'boors,' or serfs, with them. So that near the English towns are always to be found the boorlands. Which is as it may be, but the fact is at any rate sufficiently curious. And from Ben Rathan also, looking to the westward, just over the cliffs of our isle, you could see White Horse Bay, much frequented of late years for convenience of debarkation by the Freetraders of Captain

[1] This refers more to Portowarren and the Douglashall shore than to the harder rocks of Isle Rathan (Hestan).

[2] Craigdarroch is, of course, a name wilfully transplanted.

Yawkins' band, with whom, as my father used to say quaintly, no honest smuggler hath company."

It was on these wide sands also that, at the turn of the tide, flounders were to be fished—and are, indeed, unto this day. Though oftener I myself have done it on the flats over about the Scaur and Rough Island! Here is how Patrick Heron did his work in the grey of the morning:—

"This morning of which I speak there was not a great deal to complain of, save that I left the others snoring in their hammocks and box-beds round the chambers of dark oak where they were lodged. The thought of this annoyed me as I went.

Tramping Flounders.

"It was still dark when I went out with only my boots over my bare feet, and the chill wind whipping about my shanks. What of the sea one could observe was of the colour of the inside of an oyster shell, pearl grey and changeful. The land loomed mistily dark, and there were fitful lights coming and going about the farm-steadings.

"It was cold and unkindly out on the flats, and there was nothing except lythe and saithe in the nets—save some small red trout, which I cast over on the other side, that they might grow large and run up the rivers in August. So with exceedingly cold feet, and not in the best of tempers, I must proceed to the flats and tramp flounders for our breakfast. Right sorely did I grieve now that I had not awaked two of the others. For Andrew Allison's feet were manifestly intended by nature for tramping flounders, being broad and flat as the palm of my hand. Moreover, John his brother was quick and biddable at the job — though I think chiefly because he desired much to get back to his play about the caves and on the sand with his ancient crony, Bob Nicoll.

"But I was all my lone on the flats, and it was sufficiently dreary work. Nevertheless, I soon had my nets full of the flapping, slippery fish—though it was not too nice a job to

THE HARBOUR

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feel them slide between your toes and wriggle their tails under your instep. It was, however, somewhat pleasanter to hear them by-and-by making their tails go flip-flap in the frizzle of the pan. For flounders fresh out of the water is indeed food for the gods, and gives one an appetite with only thinking about it."

There are, however, other wild ways about Auchencairn without going seaward. Screel and Ben Gairn tower high above, often menacing the little white village with the clouds which gather so easily about their craggy tops.

It is by no means time thrown away to take a stroll up the purple side of Screel with Sammle Tamson, even if it be not the traveller's luck to find the true Screel. and only "Cauldron of Ben Tudor."

"Finally, recalled to himself by a dash of rain in his face from a passing shower and the tide washing simultaneously about his feet, he strode away up the tangle of woodland which fringes the bay, and in ten minutes was breasting the brae towards the dark heathery fastnesses of Screel.

"As he made his way westward, with surprising craft Sammle took advantage of every cover. He followed the deep lip of a peat moss from which the fuel had been cut away for a hundred yards. He crouched behind a boulder till a wandering herd with a couple of scouring dogs passed off the sky-line. Nevertheless, it was swiftly, though with the utmost circumspection, that he approached the tangle of six-foot long heather which conceals the descent into the Cauldron of Ben Tudor.

"The afternoon had early broken down into a thronging procession of white cirrus cloudlets, varied occasionally by one of haughtier build, as some towering cumulus overrode the lift with his bulk, crenellated like a feudal keep. Shining glints of thunder-shower shot down occasionally from these, and once Sammle felt on his face the sting of hail. Having once arrived at the shaggy verge, from which through the interstices of whin, broom, and rock-climbing ivy he could

look into the untracked and untravelled wilderness, Sammle lay down on his breast and studied the landscape. Far out to sea, towards the open water of the firth, a schooner hung off and on, waiting for night or tide. But Sammle was no smuggler, though possibly he might have been indicted for conspiracy."

Or, again, it is delightful to ride to call upon Silver Sand in the old Tower of Orchardton. There are excellent roads nowadays, so there is no need to founder your beast on the lairy Kirkmirren flats, as did young Mr. Maxwell Heron in the time of the Levellers.

"We clattered over the hard sand and shingle on the Orraland shore, went more slowly over the rugged foothills of Screel, and presently bore away to the east across the lairy Kirkmirren flats. After a long breathing gallop through lands covered with short sea-grass, and bloomed over even now by the stone-crop and blue maritime holly, my father dismounted in a little wood, and tied his beast to a tree in a place very retired and secret.

"'Let them have their nosebags for a little here while we go forward,' he said. 'Our good Silver Sand does not love overly many horse tracks about his abode.'

"Then, having thus arranged matters with satisfaction to himself and the beasts, my father took along the first of the broken dykes (for we were now off his lands), and, making a detour to the right, suddenly emerged upon an ancient grey tower, apparently ruinous and wholly desolate. On three sides it was surrounded by hills, for the most part thickly wooded with natural scrub, but on the other, towards the east, the ground was more open. The tower looked upon a green valley, through which a little lane ran, or, rather, loitered and lingered with a temperate gladness. Beyond that again a high hill rose up abruptly and sheltered the tower from the sea. There were the ruins of a considerable farm-town

"Orchardton Auld Toor."

THE MOUTH OF THE DEE

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near by. But all was now deserted—only in the midst an ancient tower stood up, called, as my father now told me, the Round Tower of Orchardton. I remembered now that I had seen it on a boyish ramble many years ago, but that, being alone, I had taken to my heels and run away at some fancied noise which I heard—a sound as of hollow knocking upon wood high up in the tower—the pixies making some one's coffin, as I decided. So I ran home at full speed, lest the coffin should prove to be mine, and the little Pechts should catch me and fit me into it forthwith."

Of the village of to-day, clean and delightful to view, clambering about its sunny brae-face in a fashion all its own, I have little to say. Though I love it too, and I am glad that it lacks the sea-front, the negro minstrels, even the "excellent bathing accommodation" necessary for popularity. Quiet it is, and quiet it is likely to remain. But mayhap that is the best fortune of all—to be loved by a few greatly and constantly, rather than to be loudly applauded and immediately forgotten by the many.

I close these random memories of the little shoreward village by a picture of a parliament which meets, or used to meet thirty years ago, nightly during the winter in every "smiddy" throughout Galloway. The sketch was written in, if not of, the village. And those who have known Auchencairn best and longest will understand best why it has been printed in this place.

CARDONESS CASTLE

CHAPTER XII

THE SMIDDY PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT was in session. It met in the smiddy, and the smith was the Speaker. He differed from the other Speaker at Westminster in this, that he really did most of the speaking. Rob Affleck of the Craig, was the only man who disputed the floor with him. But then to listen to Rob was generally held to be as good as a play.

There were a dozen of men from the neighbouring farms who had come in with their plough gear to get sorted, and a sprinkling of the village folk who found no place so bright and heartsome in the long winter nights as the smithy by the burnside. The very door was blocked up with boys who dared not come any farther. At these Whaupneb Jock, the smith's apprentice, occasionally threw a ladleful of water from the cooling cauldron, by way of keeping them in their place and asserting his own superiority.

The Whinnyliggate House of Commons was discussing matters seriously. It had four subjects—ministers in the abstract, ministers, women, and Mr. Gladstone. Women was the only one of these which they discussed philosophically. But upon all topics the smith prevented any accidents from over-emphatic tongues. As soon as he heard anything unparliamentary, he protruded a fist, solid as a ham, an inch beneath the speaker's nose.

"Smell that," he said.

This was called in Whinnyliggate the *clôture*.

"It's as easy to choose a minister as it is to sup yer porridge, man," said Rob Affleck of the Craig, with great assurance and some contempt.

As he spoke he lifted a coal from the smiddy hearth between his finger and thumb and dropped it dexterously into the bowl of his pipe, turning it with a rapid rotary movement as he did so. All the boys of the vicinity watched him with admiration and awe. To be able to do this was to be a great man. Each of them would rather have been able to lift a coal with Rob's unconcern than get a good conduct prize at school. Which was only a two-shilling book at any rate. But in the meantime it was worth while trying for both distinctions. The master of the village school, Duncan Duncanson, wondered why so many of his pupils had blisters on their thumbs and second fingers when they came to write. One day he found out. It was Fred Mill whom he caught practising lighting a pipe in Rob Affleck's way. After this blisters were not confined to the finger and thumb of those caught with the brand of Tubal Cain upon their hands.

"As easy as suppin' your porridge, man!" he repeated more emphatically than before, though in reality no one had contradicted him.

"I dinna haud wi' ministers!" interjected the budding freethinker of Whinnyliggate, Alexander White, generally known as "Ac White."

Clang—cling! Clang—cling! Clang—cling! went the

sledge and small hammer on the anvil as the smith and his assistant forged a coulter.

Clang—cling! Clank-a-clink—cling—cling—cling!

The foreman dropped the sledge and stood leaning on it. The smith himself elaborated the red cooling metal with his smaller hammer, turning it about briskly with his pincers.

"Ay, man, Ac White, an' what said ye?" he asked, as he gave the dull red mass the final touches before thrusting it back again into the fire.

"I was sayin'—" began Ac the Agnostic.

But he was interrupted. The foreman at the other side had extracted out of his fire another coulter, and in a moment the smith was swinging the sledge and the journeyman in his turn moulding the iron with the small hammer, turning it about deftly in his pincers as the blows fell.

Clang—cling! Clang—cling! Clang—cling!

"I was sayin' that I dinna haud wi' ministers ava'," said Ac White.

The smith cast down the heavy coulter. It fell on Ac White's toes. That is what is called a dispensation in the Whinnyliggate smiddy, where the smith sometimes acted instead of Providence. Ac White's language came in a burst.

"Smell that!" said the smith, turning sternly and suddenly.

Ac White smelt it, but apparently he did not think much of the perfume, which was that of iron, grime, and newly-shod horse-hoofs—a scent particularly wholesome and vigorous.

His words were dammed back within him.

The smith was coaxing the fire into a whiter heat by taking up little shovelfuls of small coal and letting them trickle upon the cracked red volcano above the coulter he was heating. With his left hand upon the polished handle of the bellows, he kept up a mild equable blowing with short light strokes. Rob Affleck's pipe was now going fine. The smith looked over at him, which was a signal that there was an interval in the hammering, long enough for Rob to utilise by treating

further on his subject, which was ministers in the abstract—also elders.

"It's easy aneuch gettin' a minister," repeated Rob, who, like all Whinnyliggate talkers, had to make a fair fresh start each time; "but it's quite anither thing to get half-a-dizen o' guid elders—fair to middlin', that is. They're easy aneuch to elect, but then your wark's no dune. We hae to get them to accept, ye see! Noo, it's no juist every man that likes to bind hissel' to come hame straught up on end in his gig every Monday nicht, as an elder is expectit to do. Na, lads, it's a deal to ask o' ony man, year in an' year oot."

"Was that what keepit you frae takin' the eldership last year, Rob?" said the smith, over the handle of the bellows.

"Na, smith, it wasna that. I'm a man, as ye micht say, under authority—in ither words, I'm weel marriet. An' Kirsty disna encourage Monday nicht ploys. It wad be tellin' you gin ye had sic a throughgaun wife, an' yin that was as handy wi' the tawtie-beetle[1] as my wife."

"Is that what gars ye gang so regularly to the kirk, Rob?" said Ac White, the professional scoffer.

Rob Affleck turned towards the bench where Ac sat. Apparently he saw a toad upon it.

When he spoke it was after a moment of silent contemplation, and in a voice weighty with unutterable sarcasm.

"I gang sae regularly to the kirk, my man Ac, juist for the self-same reason that ye gang sae regularly to the Blue Bell—because I like what I get there an' because I like the company. Gin I dinna gang to the Blue Bell, I hae the grace o' God to thank for that—an' my wife's wullin' airm. I'm a man that has great mercies!" Rob concluded, with feeling.

"We a' hae muckle to be thankfu' for," said the smith, who also had a wife at home with coercive methods of her own.

This was, indeed, clearly the general sense of the meeting.

"No but what I say," said Rob Affleck, "that a man may be a verra respectable man, an' yet by-whiles hae a bit accident. Consider for a meenit," he added, laying a finger

[1] A heavy wooden mallet for bruising potatoes.

on the palm of his other hand judicially; "a man may hae been sellin' his sheep, an' we'll say it has been a wat day—weel, it may hae been a positeeve needcessity for him to bide a kennin' late aboot the Commercial."

"What wad yer Cameronian minister say to that, Rob?" asked the smith, who was a Free.

"Hoot, hoot, nane o' yer lowse Free Kirk doctrine, smith," said Rob Affleck; "what's the like o' that to ony man's minister? Gin there's nae hairm dune, that is! If a man can settle it wi' his ain mistress, I uphaud that it's nae minister's business, sae lang as he disna mak' a practice o't—as the Quaker lass said when her lad kissed her."

"But ye maun admit, Rob," said the smith, after an interval of active hammering, "that there's a prejudice again drinkin' in an elder amang ither denominations as weel as you Cameronians?"

"Dod, noo, smith, I'm no sae sure o' that!" said Rob argumentatively. "Tak', for example, the pairish kirk o' Kirkmawhurr—gin ye can caa' siclike a denomination"—(here spoke Rob the Cameronian). "Weel do I mind when for twenty year there wasna an elder in a' Kirkmawhurr. First Rabin Tamson flittit, an' syne Nether Patie gaed ower to the Seceder folk, smith, juist because the Kirkmawhurr minister spoke to Nether Patie's mistress aboot copyin' his wife's bonnets.

"Noo," continued Rob Affleck, "what I'm gaun to tell ye is neither 'he said' nor 'she said,' but what I, Rob Affleck, saw wi' my ain e'en. The minister o' Kirkmawhurr was a man that was weel kenned to be fond o' a bit glass——"

"Like a' the rest o' them!" said Ac White, from the scoffer's platform of superiority.

"Smell that!" shouted the smith, instantly reaching over and taking Ac's nose between his finger and thumb.

"Be thankfu', Ac," he said, slowly waggling the freethinker's head backwards and forwards between his fingers, as it were testing the way that it was jointed on to the neck, with a view to improvements in the mechanism, "be thankfu', my man,

NEAR AUCHENKIM

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AUCHENCAIRN, LOOKING DOWN THE STREET

that ye hae a nose ava'. The next time ye say a word again ministers in my smiddy," (here an emphatic shake) "ye'll no hae eneuch nose to tak' haud o' wi' a pair o' pliers!"

The scorner's chair was decidedly an uncomfortable seat in the smiddy of Whinnyliggate. But Rob Affleck had something also to say to Ac White, when the smith had done fingering his nose. The scoffer tried an unhappy laugh, as though these indignities were the merest jests to him.

"Ye needna nicher an' laugh, Alexander White—I saw you comin' hame frae the Blue Bell on Saturday nicht. And what's mair, I heard what Jean said till ye when ye got hame. O man, ye were but the sma' man that nicht."

Clank-cling! Clank-cling! Cling-clang—went the smith and his foreman, shutting down discussion with a riot of melodious din.

When the shower of sparks was abated, "Tell us about your seein' a Session," said some one who had heard Rob's tale before, and had a respect for it.

Rob Affleck performed his usual sleight-of-hand with the live coal in a leisurely manner, to the admiration of the assembled boys, who again realised what it was to be a great man. It was to put a coal in your pipe like Rob Affleck. When he had it half-way up, he stopped to say a word to the smith upon the price of wool, all the while twirling the red coal between his finger and thumb. That pause nearly canonised him. Even the juvenile Ac White of the party (aged ten) believed in miracles from that time forth. There were more blisters than ever on their writing fingers when Duncan Duncanson bade them "show hands" next morning. After the cause had been made sufficiently clear, several of these experimental philosophers sat down with difficulty and circumspection for about the space of a week.

"As I was sayin'," began Rob, while the audience in the smiddy settled itself to listen with unfeigned pleasure to the recital, "as I was sayin', the minister o' Kirkmawhurr was considered to be fond o' a glass himself."

Here Rob paused, and the smith gazed with a stern severity

at Ac White, who rubbed his nose and was silent. The smith turned half disappointedly away. He had hoped that Ac might be moved to say something more. It was indeed a Christian duty, besides being a pleasure, to pull Ac White's nose in the interests of the faith.

"Noo," continued Rob, "it was but yae gless, an' it never did him ony hairm that I ever heard of, but as I said, he had no elders in his ain pairish. He had to borrow a couple, or maybes three, frae the pairish o' the Dullarg, an', ye see, the puir man didna aye get first quality.

"Noo, the borrowed elders stoppit at the Manse o' Kirkmawhurr frae the Saturday till the Monday, an', as they had their wull o' meal-ark an' decanter, Maister Fergus had sma' difficulty in borrowin' elders within his ain denomination."

Ac White gave a kind of grunt, but the smith turned on him an eye so glad and terrible, and his fingers twitched so obviously with desire, that Ac changed the grunt instantly into a cough.

"It was aye understood that the borrowed elders were to gang hame on the Monday on their ain feet, gin they could, an' on Tuesday in a cairt—when they war, as it micht be, incapacitated for foot-travel."

"Tell us nae lees!" said the smith, casually, hammering the coulter on the point of the anvil as if he had an ill-will at it.

"It's fac' as daith, I'm tellin' ye," asserted Rob; "I mind it weel. I was but a lump o' a callant in thae days—the size o' three scrubbers, as ye micht say. Weel, yae day (it was a Tuesday, I mind, because we kirned that day an' I had to help in the dairy), my faither cam' up the loanin' and he lookit that queer, I thocht it was the Sabbath when I saw his face.

"'Saw ye ever the Session o' a pairish?' says he, as if he had trampit on a taed.

"'Na, faither, I never saw a Session,' says I, fell keen to see yin—me thinkin' that it was some kind o' menagerie.

"'Come doon to the loanin' fit, then, Rob, my lad, an' I'll show ye a Session,' says he.

"He took me by the hand, an' we gaed oor ways doon the

loanin' an' lookit ower a dyke. I wad brawly hae likit to hae asked him some quastions, but by the way the corners o' his mooth was workin', I judged I had better no.

"When we first lookit ower the dyke, there was nocht to be seen but a red cart gaun by middlin' slow. 'Castor-oil Geordie,' the miller's boy, was drivin' it, wi' his feet hingin' ower the edge, and whustlin' as weel as he could for a strae atween his teeth. In the corner o' the cairt there was twa or three men lyin' tangled up in a knot, legs an' airms a' through-ither. It was the Dullarg borrowed Session gaun hame on the Tuesday frae the Kirkmawhurr sacrament.

"My faither pointit wi' his finger. 'Noo, mind, Rob,' he says, verra slow, 'ye hae seen a pairish-kirk session!'"

"Was that what made ye a Cameronian, Rob?" said the smith, anxious in his interest for the common good to keep Rob Affleck going. For to hear him in good fettle was better than a Fast Day preaching.

"Na," said Rob cautiously, "I'll tell ye what made me a Cameronian, when thae bairns hae been cried hame to their beds."

The smith turned to the dark semicircle of Peris at the gates of Paradise, each glowering in with all his might and all desiring to hear every word.

"Gae hame wi' ye," he said, "yer mithers are wantin' you. They'll pay ye weel for bidin' sae late frae hame."

Not a boy moved: there was no power in a mere threat. The smith drew out of the forge a bar of iron hissing hot, vicious white sparks spitting off it. This he waved in the direction of the door, and the white shower pelting like shooting stars, beat back the circle of boys for a moment; but they soon closed in again, however, as thick as before, like wolves around a camp-fire.

. . . . . .

"But what's this aboot the election for precentor, Rob?" said the smith, to keep the saga-man going. The smith claimed the right to ask leading questions, and any man who usurped his privilege generally got a spark in his eye that

ISLE RATHAN

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kept him rubbing for some time—even if, like Ac White, he did not get a heavy coulter flung on his toes, accidentally.

"Weel, as I was sayin'," said Rob Affleck, "to find a minister is as easy as to sup your porridge. To get an elder is as easy as to find a second wife. But to choose a precentor is the verra de'il an' a'! It's as camsteery a job as to get seven dochters a' weel married."

"Gae 'way, man," said the smith, "I could choose a precentor that's a guid singer in five meenites."

"That's the verra point, smith," returned Rob Affleck triumphantly. "There's no man or woman in the congregation—though deaf, and dumb, halt, maimed *and* blind—that disna either think that they could lead the singin' themselves, or that they hae a sister's son's cousin twice removed, that wad be the verra man for the poseetion. There was Daft Dawvid Todd o' the Shirmers, him that had been deaf frae his cradle, an' he actually proposed his brither-in-law, though the craitur could do naething but skraich. 'Deed, he learned a' the singin' that he kens, herdin' the Shirmers craws aff the corn."

"Is't true," said the smith significantly, "that you Cameronian folk hae split the kirk ower your new precentor?"

"Weel, no exactly that," said Rob, hesitating. It was not easy for him in a mixed company to speak concerning the inner secrets of his creed.

"Ye see, it's this way. There's mair nor yin has left the Kirk for a Sabbath or twa, I'm no denyin'; but they're a' soond Cameronians, an' after the dirdum's by, they'll come back, no a hair the waur."

"I dinna ken aboot that," said the smith, shaking his head; "I saw Maister Duguid o' the Established Kirk gang intil Jamie MacVane's this foreday."

"James MacVane was as weel grounded by his faither in the faith, as I was by mine. There's nae fear o' Jame —na, Maister Duguid may scart his fit."

Thus confidently, Rob Affleck.

"What faut hae ye till the new man, Rob?" said the

smith. "I hear that he's a graund reader o' the music, an' that he writes the words o' the tune in the air afore him as he gangs alang."

There was a general expression of wonderment and admiration at this from the corners of the smiddy where the young fellows sat, attentive and silent in the face of the privileged wisdom of their seniors. The smith was pleased. He took it as a compliment to his powers of description.

"Noo, smith," continued Rob, "that's juist whaur the faut comes in. It was for that verra reason that Betty Carmichael, the grieve's wife at Staneybyres, a member o' forty years' guid standin', thocht him baith gesturin' and feckless. She says —an' faith there's some sense in't—that he canna baith hae his mind on the words o' King Dawvid, an' on his whigmaleeries an' ingrydoories.[1]

"Then there's the guid man o' Carsewall says that he's no gaun back to the kirk ony mair, because the new precentor hasna sung 'Coleshill' for a maitter o' three Sabbaths an' mair. An' even for mysel', I canna say that I like the way he has wi' the names o' the psalm tunes. It was bonny to watch oor auld yin shiftin' them like playin' cairds frae hand to hand when the minister was geein' oot the psalm, an' then juist afore he raise to sing, stickin' the right yin in the wee clip afore him, an' turnin' it aboot so that a' fowk could see him. It showed maist amazin' presence o' mind. A man what could do that was fit to be a precentor in a Cameronian Kirk."

"An' what else does the new precentor do?" asked the smith, though he knew very well.

"He has the names o' the tunes a' strung up on a board at the side o' the pulpit, for a' the world like saut herrin' that has been steepit an' hung up to dreep."

"But, Rob," said the smith, pausing argumentatively to lean on his forehammer, "is't no unco weak-like to mak' a' this disturbance aboot a precentor? You Hill Folk are awfu'

[1] Rings and pictures which children make in the dark with the red end of a burnt stick.

clannish, but for a' that ye fecht amang yin anither like a wheen herds' tykes."

"Ah, smith," said Rob Affleck compassionately, "it's easy seen that ye're nocht but a Free, or ye wadna haiver like that. You Frees wadna care gin yer psalms were turned on by water poo'er on a puggy's whurly organ,[1] sae lang as the bell on yer steeple gaed '*Ran-tan, C'lection! C'lection!*' But us o' the Cameronian persuasion, we think sae muckle o' oor speeritual Zion that we are aye walkin' roond aboot her, tellin' the too'ers o' her, that she may be perfect, throughly furnished to every good work—aye, even to the verra precentor!"

Rob lifted his hat as he spoke with a Covenanter's instinctive reverence for his own scanty communion—a hard-featured and lonely, but not untender mother.

Gradually the congregation outside the smiddy door had been growing smaller. One after another the boys remembered that if they went home now their porridge would be ready for them, but that if they delayed they would find something quite different awaiting them. So they quietly withdrew themselves. Finally only Michael Tweedie was left, who stayed on till his mother came after him, bearing in her hand an old slipper, of which only the heel was serviceable. Michael retired hurriedly from the smiddy door, amid the tumult of his mother's reproofs, the slipper heel tap-tapping on the more solid portions of his person much like the smith's smaller hammer on the anvil.

"Noo, Rob, tell us aboot hoo ye became a Cameronian." Rob looked out of the smiddy door. There was not a boy to be seen outside. All within were breeched into manhood.

"It was a maitter o' a lass."

"I was jaloosin' [suspecting] sae!" said the smith. In this parish, lasses often decided church connection. But though all present were fond of talking about the lasses, they did not do it when either the too elderly or the over-youthful elements of society were present.

[1] An organ-grinder's instrument with a monkey attached.

"Aye, it was a lass," said Rob Affleck.

He spoke thoughtfully, and all the company respected his musing mood.

"I took a notion o' a bit lass that gaed up to the U.P.'s. Dod, but she was a snod bit daisy — for a U.P.," added Rob guardedly. "We'll say that her name was Katie Semple."

"No yin o' the Semples o' Milnthird?" asked the smith.

"Na, no yin o' *them*," replied Rob drily. "I dinna think ony o' ye kens the Semples that I'm speakin' aboot the noo. Weel, Katie was a bonny lass—feat an' trig as a denty white birk by the water-side."

The young men nodded at one another all round the smiddy in approbation of the excellence of the comparison.

"I trysted wi' her ae fair-day an' spent my last shillin' buyin' her a fairin'. I saw her hame; an' when I came hame to the Craig the door was lockit, so I sleepit in the barn a' that nicht, or raither what was left o't."

Again the circle looked intelligent. Their experience squared with Rob's on this point. He was an enticing speaker, Rob Affleck. He awakened memories and quickened anticipations.

"Sae I trysted to meet her at the kirk on the Sabbath—her being as she was—a U.P."

Rob's hearers quite appreciated the extent of the sacrifice he thus made of his principles to the tender passion. A treatise could not better have expressed the depth of the impression made that fatal fair-night upon his heart.

"Sae on the Sabbath morning I gat oot a' my best ties, an' it was maybe half-an-'oor afore I could mak' up my mind whatna yin to pit on. But at the hinder end, I took a plain scarlet yin wi' green spots that had been considered by some raither effective—ye mind o't, smith?"

The smith nodded.

"That was a tie!" he said impressively. Evidently he had in his mind a great many ties of which as much could not be said.

OPPOSITE ISLE RATHAN

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"We're a' saft in spots," said Rob Affleck, "an' my soft spot's a nice bit lass—I dinna mind tellin' ye."

There was a movement of sympathy throughout the smiddy.

"Ye are far frae singular in that, my man, *in this pairish!*" said the smith, as one who speaks of what he does know.

"I had gotten me ready for the kirk an' I was daunerin' awa' quaitely, so as no to be obtrusive in my devotions, as ye micht say. At the waterin'-stane wha micht I meet but my faither. He had a look o' meditation on his face, an' a braw big whup in his hand.

"'Ye are gaun to the kirk?' says my faither, as pleased-like as if new-kirned butter wadna melt in his mooth.

"'Aye,' says I, 'I was a-thinkin' o' gaun ower to the U.P.'s the day!'

"'Ye'll gang farther than that!' says he.

"'Weel, faither,' says I, 'I'll maybe gang as far as the Frees at the Cross Roads —me thinkin' that the Frees, feckless bodies, were aye sune oot, an' that I could see the lass weel eneuch on my road back.

"'Na, na, Rob,' says my faither, 'ye'll gang a deal farther than that!'

"Then I flew up on a passion. For I used to be a passionate man afore I fell under grace."

"Just like me," said the smith, looking round hopefully to see if Ac White felt inclined to dispute it. But Ac's place was empty.

"'I'll no gang a step farther for you or ony man, though ye be my faither,' says I. 'I'd hae ye ken that I'm no a wean to be dictatit to.'

"Wi' that my faither's whup crackit round my legs an' garred me jump, like a wasp settlin' tail foremost on the back o' yer neck—as yin might say.

"'Ye hae maist uncommon ticht breeks on, Rob, my man,' said my faither, 'an' this is a guid stark bit whup, though it has been yince or twice mendit. An' this mornin' ye are gaun doon to Maister Gilchrist at Cairn Edward to hear the funda-

mentals soondly laid doon, as behoves the son o' a Cameronian. We are frail creatures, but I maun see that ye get the gospel o' grace properly preached as lang as it's in my poo'er,' says he. 'Man's life is but in his lip!' says he."

Here there was a long pause in the smiddy. Even the stolid journeyman did not blow upon his bellows.

"An' that's the way I became a Cameronian!" said Rob, with a very significant hiatus in his argument.

"And the lass?" queried one from the back parts of the smiddy.

Bob Affleck was silent for a long moment.

"The lass gaed awa' to America," he said, "and I heard nae mair o' her!

"But," he added with a sigh, rising to take his leave, "whiles I think on her yet."

"I'se warrant ye do that," said the smith, who had a poet's heart deep down under that rough husk of his; "mony a nicht ye will be thinkin' on her, when your ain guidwife lies soond by you."

CHAPTER XIII

BORGUE

THE county town is also in a way the county belle. For the sober beauty which the instructed eye loves, there is nothing like her in the south. The streets of Kirkcudbright are generally wide, the houses well-set on good grounds of their own. Gardens peep out here and there. A man passes with an easel under his arm. He is pretending that he is going to work. There are also men down by the little quay who look as if they had gone there to labour. It is all a pretence. They only smoke and watch the tide covering the brown mud on the river banks. There are, however, within hearing, busy little people and a busy schoolmistress, up above in the small delightful schoolhouse. It hums presently like a hive of bees, and from it a sound of singing is wafted as far as the bridge. Kirkcudbright river-front is a pleasant place to dream on. The world's hum is far away. There is only the children's chant in the school down by the bridge. Above all, there is no cattle-market.

The County Belle.

And then, how delightful are the byeways all about! There is the walk by the town parks, with a dreamlike view back upon the ancient town, with its towers and roofs, over a foreground of beehives and garden patches. There is also that perfect fairyland where one seeks for Hatteraick's Cave, away past the lifeboat station. Best of all, perhaps, there is the Borgue shore, all sandy cove and wooded slope, with old thorns throwing themselves away from the sea, their arms outstretched and gnarled, as if they were crying, "For heaven's dear sake, let us get out of this wind!"

Behind this again, in bieldy hollows, are fine old square-built farmhouses, with vast outbuildings, in what is the brightest and most English part of Galloway. In one of these once on a time two little boys played together in a large garden during the long-continued heats of the dry summer 1868. The garden was cut up into squares by walks which ran at right angles to each other. There were square plots of gooseberry bushes, square wildernesses of pea-sticks, and square strawberry beds in that corner where it was forbidden for small, sweet-toothed boys to go. At the upper end an orchard ran right across, every tree in which was climbable, and a wall, with a flight of steps over into a field, bounded all. Great trees, generations old, surrounded the garden and orchard, and cast here and there throughout it circular plots of pleasant shade amid the garden squares. It was, said the wiseacres, too much buried in foliage to make the best of gardens. But I can vouch that it suited two small boys that summer-tide very well.

Borgue is the metropolis of bee-land. Everywhere indeed there is a vague hum in the air. The clear, pale, aquamarine-coloured honey is sold even in the marts of London, and at the proper season in Borgue itself every housekeeper's and good-wife's cupboard is a sight to see. There are first the products of orchard and garden—the neat white pots of red currant jelly, the larger dishes of gooseberry preserve, and marmalade with long amber straws lying across it, accurately cut into lengths, and in the more plastic parts deep and rich like cairngorms. After a while these get shoved a little farther back upon the ample shelves, as the autumnal days creep in shorter, and the honey-comb begins to arrive. There were no "sections" in my day—no hives scientifically contrived. The poor bees had perforce to be content with their straw-built tenement, labouring late and early to fill it to the utmost peak. This would have pleased them well enough, but alas! one autumn night when the winds were still, or only blew up the strath with a kind of sucking breath, there came a reek of burning sulphur. And the

Honey-land.

THE HEART OF BORGUE

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next day, lo! combs of rich honey, ridged and shaped to the convolutions of the "skep," were laid upon each other like huge piled toadstools. The whole house was scented with the "straining" of amber honey as the nets of gauze, swung between the backs of chairs, dripped their slow-running silent-falling greenish freight into the appointed jars of tall clear glass.

The farthest back in the good-wife's cupboard, and the earliest in time, are the combs of the springtime—delicately green, as if the bees had extracted some of the mounting sap. These pots seemed to be fragrant with a faint, far-away, wild-wood breath of crocus and wind-flower, and the blowing heads of Lent lilies. The next are of fuller flavour—the green alternating with amber and tawny, from the clover of pasture-fields, over which the soft winds of June had blown through the short and merciful nights. Then, golden-brown as the pools where the salmon sulk waiting for the floods that they may leap upward, arrives the first heather honey, product of the purple ling, which clothes the sides of the Bennan and gleams afar upon Ben Gairn. Last of all, keen-scented as wood smoke, yet with a tang to it like nothing else in the world, most precious conserve of leagues of the true heather, wine-red and glorious, are certain dark-brown combs, through which the knife cuts clean and luscious, revealing the scented essence which the bees carried while the shots were cracking and the grouse falling over leagues of moorland. There is usually most of this, for (though Borgue does not think so) that is the best vintage, which the Master of the Bees keeps to the last. The hives for the heather-honey have been carried in jolting carts up to the purple sides of the Girthon Hills and there left—a busy little colony—to their own resources, till the heather browns, and the bent turns grey and rustling as silver-shakers in the keen winds of the moorland.[1]

In Borgue and the lower parts of Girthon, all farm life is particularly rich and vivid. The farms are mostly large enough to be well-to-do, and prosperity brings about them

[1] *V.* "Cinderella," p. 116. (James Clarke & Co.)

all manner of mirth and country jollity—yet they are not so large as to have become mere commercial concerns.

In these farm-towns life begins early, generally about four in the morning, summer and winter. Hard work, without any halt or "let up," fills all the forenoon, till the midday dinner. After that, there is a little more humanity in the driving of man and beast.

"Afternoon is slack-water in the duties of the house, at least for the womenfolk—except in hay and harvest, when it is full flood tide all the time, day *and* night. So it will be readily seen that afternoon happens far on in the day for such as have tasted the freshness of the morning."

That is the time for the scone-baking, the cake-making, and the pleasant duties of the housewife, or more frequently, house-maiden. Blessed is he who finds himself at liberty at such a time.

The Bread-Baking.

"For" (says the Man of Experience) "there is no prettier sight than this to be seen in Galloway, hardly even a blanket-washing when coats are kilted for the tramping, when the sun deepens the colour on rosy cheeks, and well-shaped ankles shine white as the flashing heels of Mercury himself.

"Many promising courtships begin in this way. And a pretty girl certainly looks her prettiest with arms bared well-nigh to the shoulder, while the to-and-fro movement of the roller on the bake-board brings out all the more fascinating graces of movement and play of dimpled elbow.

"Rap! Rap! Rap! Rap! It comes to the ear in varied keys of sound, dull and sharp, according to the thickness of the dough beneath. At intervals a hand showers a delicate top-dressing of flour with a twist of the wrist much admired by connoisseurs, and indeed worthy of being noted by all. This is generally accompanied by a smile at the attendant youth, so he be a worthy one and deserving of having trouble taken with him. Immediately after this the cakes need attending to. They have already been removed from the round iron girdle which hangs over the clear fire—a fire

THE BORGUE SHORE ROAD

gentle, mild, and insinuating, no roisterous flame, but a 'griesoch' rather, mellow and mellowing all about it.

"The same pretty hands, the flour being touched away with the corner of snowy apron, now take the oaten cakes and turn them at the side of the fire, setting each at the proper angle to get the best of the heat, so that it may come forth a worthy cake, light in the mouth, crisp to the tooth, and much to be desired as fare fit for the gods! After this, such knitting of brows—such poisings of head to decide whether the fortunate cake is ready or not! Then—almost as if it were a theft, sweet and pardonable as that other which (in intent) has been in the young man's head for the last quarter of an hour, the least crumb is broken off the corner—follows a flash of white teeth as it is tested, and the rest offered to the worthy observer.

"At this point the youth, if he have in him any manhood, or that adventurous spirit which makes its way with maids even in staid Galloway, slides off the corner of the table, and —but let all those who have assisted at such bakings of the cake recall to themselves what happens then. There be heads grey and heads white, and heads (alas, that ever it should be so!) already growing thin or shiny a-top whose locks were once like the raven. There be hearts which once bounded fiery as barbs under the snowy baking-apron, that are now covered by the staid dove's grey of the 'old maid,' or oftener still by the widow's plain black—yet neither head nor heart hath ever forgotten the baking of the cake, nor yet that tell-tale print of a small floury hand upon a shoulder, on account of which, issuing forth, the favoured swain endured, not all unwillingly, his comrades' envious laughters."[1]

The Cow-Milking.

To this follows (after tea, or the homely plate of porridge) the time of the cow-milking. Shy lads look in at the byre door. The bolder stand, each at the cow's tail of his chosen, as she milks. There is much confidential talk abroad, the steady drill of the milk into the "luggies" drowning it. "I will see ye later," is the

[1] "Cinderella," p. 70. (James Clarke & Co.)

burden of many a soft-sung song, and "the place where ... well understood of both.

There is even a method in the letting out of the kye to the dewy evening pastures, as it is written of one Jess Kissock, who being of an envious nature did the business unsympathetically.

"In a little while the cows were all milked. Saunders was standing at the end of the barn, looking down the long valley of the Grannoch Water. There was a sweet coolness in the air, as if the Sabbath were already near, which he vaguely recognised by taking off his hat.

"'Open the yet: ' cried Jess, from the byre door. Saunders heard the clank and jangle of the neck-chains of Hornie and Speckly and the rest, as they fell from their necks, loosened by Jess's hand. The sound grew fainter and fainter as Jess proceeded to the top of the byre where Marly stood soberly sedate and chewed her evening cud. Now Marly did not like Jess, therefore Meg always milked her. She would not, for some special reason of her own, 'let doon her milk' if Jess so much as laid a finger on her. This night she only shook her head and pushed heavily against Jess as she came nearer.

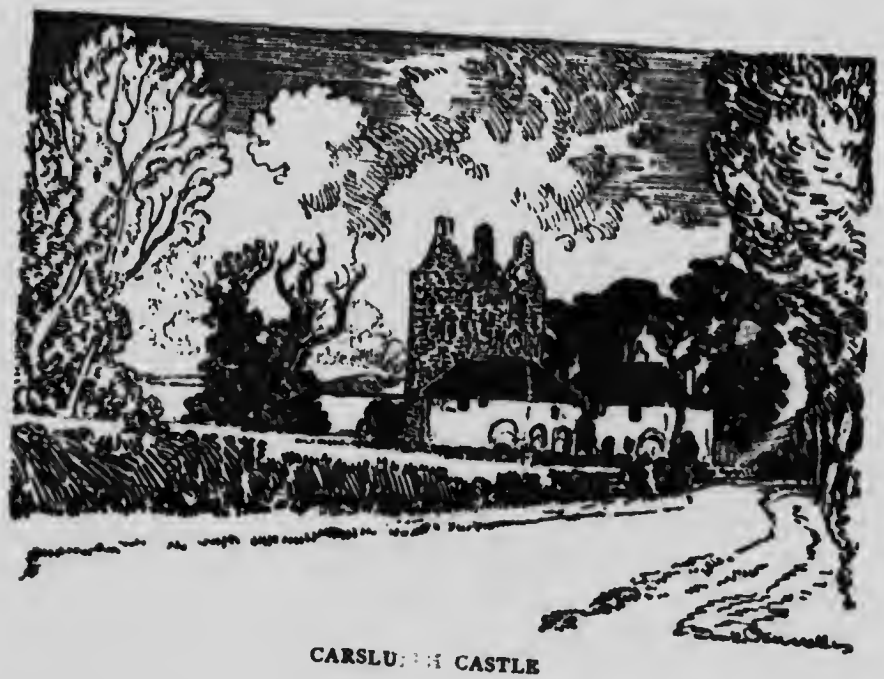
"'Haud up there, ye thrawn randy!' said Jess, in byre tones.

"And so very sulkily Marly moved out, looking for Meg, her own mistress, right and left as she did so. She had her feelings as well as any one, and she was not the first who had been annoyed by the sly, mischievous gipsy with the black eyes, who kept so quiet before folk. As she went out by the byre door, Jess laid her switch smartly across Marly's loins, much to the loss of dignity of that stately animal, who, taking a hasty step, slipped on the threshold, and then overtook her neighbours with a slow resentment gathering in her m... only breast.

"When Saunders Mowdiewort heard the last chain drop in the byre, and the strident tones of Jess exhorting Marly, he took a few steps to the gate of the hill pasture. He had to

pass along a short home-made road, and over a low parapetless bridge constructed simply of four tree-trunks laid parallel and covered with turf. Then the bars of the gate into the hill pasture dropped with a clatter, which came cheerfully to Winsome's ears as she stood at her window looking out into the night."[1]

[1] "The Lilac Sunbonnet," p. 152. (T. Fisher Unwin.)



CARSLUITH CASTLE

CHAPTER XIV

TWO GALLOWAY SHRINES

I.—RUTHERFORD'S KIRK

THE howe of Anwoth—Anwoth by the Solway—is dear to many to whom the name of Samuel Rutherford conveys little. A certain warmth of temperament and language, even when devoted to temple service, causes his "Letters" to be misunderstood of some. But no man made his mark deeper on his time than the "little fair man," whose ministrations are still remembered in Galloway after well-nigh three hundred years. Even when exiled to Aberdeen he had more influence in Scotland than the whole bench of bishops created by King Jamie of the Baggy-Breeks.

But certain words he uttered when dying, have made him more famous over the world than all the many noble things he did, and the hymn which enshrines his passionate and

personal aspirings has gone deeper into the hearts of men and women than *Lex Rex* or twenty volumes of controversy.

It is well to go to Rutherford's kirk alone, or, as did the writer of "Sweetheart Travellers," accompanied only by a child:—

"Soon," so is it written in that book, "we glided into the clean, French-looking village of Gatehouse, where the kindest of baker's wives insisted on giving us, in addition to rolls and biscuits, 'some milk for the bairn.'

"Again we were up and in the saddle. In a moment the shouting throng fell behind. Barking and racing curs were passed as we skimmed with swallow flight down the long village street. Then we turned sharp to the right at the bottom, along the pleasant road which leads to Anwoth Kirk. Here, in Rutherford's Valley of Well Content, the hazy sunshine always sleeps. Hardly a bird chirped. Silence covered us like a garment. We rode silently along, stealing through the shadows and gliding through the sunshine, only our speed making a pleasant stir of air about us in the midday heats.

"Anwoth by the Solway."

"We dismounted, and entered into the ivy-clad walls of Rutherford's kirk. It is so small that we realised what he was wont to say when asked to leave it:—

"'Anwoth is not a large charge, but it is my charge. And all the people in it have not yet turned their hearts to the Lord!'

"So here we took hands, my Sweetheart and I, and went in. We were all alone. We stood in God's House, consecrated by the worship of generations of the wise and loving, under the roof of God's sky. We uncovered our heads, my little maid standing with wide blue eyes of reverence on a high flat tombstone, while I told her of Samuel Rutherford, who carried the innocence of a child's love through a long and stormy life. Perhaps the little head of sunny curls did not take it all in. What matter? The instinct of a child's love does not make any mistake, but looks through scarcely understood words to the true inwardness with unfailing intuition—it is the Spirit that maketh alive.

ANWOTH CHURCH

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"'*The Sands of Time are sinking*,' we sang. I can hear that music yet.

"A child's voice, clear and unfaltering, led. Another, halt and crippled, falteringly followed. The sunshine filtered down. The big bees hummed aloft among the leaves. Far off a wood-dove moaned. As the verse went on, the dove and I fell silent to listen. Only the fresh young voice sang on, strengthening and growing clearer with each line :—

"*Dark, dark hath been the midnight,*
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land!

"As we passed out, a man stood aside from the doorway to let us go by. His countryman's hat was in his hand. There was a tear on his cheek also. For he too had heard a cherub praise the Lord in his ancient House of Prayer." [1]

It may not be inappropriate to put on record in this place some of the ancient ways of worship in Galloway of the past—ways that are now almost extinct, or are driven to their last fastnesses by American organs and the march of improvement.

The Stated Catechising.

There was, for instance, the Stated Catechising by the minister. Few now living have submitted to that ordeal from a minister of the kirk. Yet he who writes has sat out, not one, but several diets of examination. How he fared is not on record, but it is related that on one occasion his grandmother prompted him, and was sternly reproved for so doing. The actual scene was something like this :—

"The family and dependants were all gathered together in the wide cool kitchen of Drumquhat, for it was the time for the minister's catechising. The Head of the House sat with his wife beside him. The three sons—Alec, James, and Rob—sat on straight-backed chairs; Walter near by, his hand on his grandmother's lap.

[1] "Sweetheart Travellers," p. 16. (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.)

"Question and answer from the Shorter Catechism passed from lip to lip, like a well-played game in which no one let the ball drop. It would have been thought as shameful if the minister had not acquitted himself at 'speerin' the questions deftly and instantaneously, as for one of those who were answering to fail in his replies. When Rob momentarily mislaid the 'Reasons Annexed' to the fifth commandment, and his very soul reeled in the sudden terror that they had gone from him for ever, his father looked at him as one who should say, 'Woe is me that I have been the responsible means of bringing a fool into the world!' Even his mother gazed at him wistfully, in a way that was like cold water running down his back, while the minister said kindly, 'Take your time, Robert!'

"However, Rob recovered himself gallantly, and reeled off the Reasons Annexed with vigour. Then he promised, under his breath, a sound thrashing to his model brother, James, who, having known the Catechism perfectly from his youth up, had yet refused to give a leading hint to his brother in his extremity." [1]

The Collection.

On Sundays the church collection was not taken up on plates at the door of the kirk, but the elders gathering the offerings went slowly and leisurely along the pews, from which the Bibles had been removed. The plain deal collection-boxes, each at the end of a pole and of an age coeval with the kirk itself, slid along the book-boards with a gentle equable noise, as the coppers and the silver severally rattled and dripped into them. It was the ancient solid members of the Kirk of the Hill who gave these last, while strangers, dibbled somewhat thickly and obviously among the true sheep, dropped in the clattering pennies.

"William Kelly, sometime betheral to the Kirk of the Hill, looked censoriously at the collection when it was emptied out on the table of the little vestry.

"'I wonder that man ower at the Kirk o' Keltonhill canna

[1] "Bog-Myrtle and Peat," p. 368. (Sands & Co.)

keep his folk at hame. Their bawbees are like to gie oor bonny white collection the black jaundice.'

"The first great feature of the day's service was the 'opening

ON THE WAY FROM GATEHOUSE TO CREETOWN

prayer.' It was very long, generally over half-an-hour, and correspondingly comprehensive. The Boy-that-Was always knew to a dot when the minister, as it were, turned his team homeward.

"Indeed the whole congregation was good at that, and

hearers began to relax themselves from their standing postures as the minister's shrill pipe rounded the corner and tacked for the harbour; but the Boy was always down before them. Once, however, after he had seated himself he was put to shame by the minister suddenly darting off on a new excursion, having remembered some other needful supplication which he had omitted. The Boy never quite regained his confidence in the minister after that. He had always thought him a good and Christian man, but thereafter he was not so sure.

"Once, also, when the minister visited the farm of Drumquhat, the Boy, being caught by his granny in the very act of escaping, was haled to instant execution with the shine of the soap on his cheeks and hair. But the minister proved kind, and did not ask for anything more abstruse than 'Man's Chief End.' He inquired, however, if the boy had ever seen him before.

"'Ow ay,' came the answer confidently; 'ye're the man that sat at the back window!'

"This was the position of the manse seat, and at the Fast Day service the minister usually sat there when a stranger preached. Not the least of Walter's treasures, now in his library, is a dusky little squat book called 'The Peep of Day,' with an inscription on it in Mr. Kay's minute and beautiful back-hand: 'To the Boy who Remembered, from the Man at the Back Window.'

"The minister was grand. In fact, he usually *was* grand. On Sunday he preached his two discourses with only the interval of a psalm and a prayer; and his first sermon was often on the spiritual rights of a Covenanted kirk, as distinguished from the worldly emoluments of an Erastian establishment. Nothing is so popular as to prove to people what they already believe, and that sermon was long remembered among the Cameronians. It redd up their position so clearly, and settled their precedence with such finality, that the Boy, hearing how the Frees had done far wrong in not joining the Cameronians in the year 1843, resolved to have his school-bag

full of good road-metal on the following morning, in order to bring the Copland boys (who were Frees) to a sense of their position.

"But as the sermon proceeded on its conclusive way, the bowed ranks of the attentive Hill Folk bent farther and farther forward, during the lengthy periods of the preacher. And when, at the close of each, they drew in a long, united breath like the sighing of the wind, and leaned back in their seats, the Boy's head began to nod over the chapters of First Samuel, which he had been spelling out.

"David's wars were a great comfort to him during these long sermons. Gradually he dropped asleep, and wakened occasionally with a start when his granny nudged him if her husband happened to look his way.

"As the little fellow's mind thus came time and again to the surface, he heard snatches of fiery oratory concerning the Sanquhar Declarations and the Covenants, National and Solemn League, till it seemed to him as though the trump of doom itself would crash before the minister had finished. And he wished it would! But at last, in sheer desperation, having slept apparently about a week, he rose with his feet upon the seat, and in his clear, childish treble he cried, being still dazed with sleep, '*Will that man no' soon be dune?*'".

II.—SHALLOCH-ON-MINNOCH

The second and very different Covenanting sanctuary marks a later stage of the controversy between the King's ill counsellors and his Scottish subjects. Shalloch-on-Minnoch lies far afield and will be little visited. It lies close to the border line which divides Ayrshire from Galloway. But to all intents and purposes it holds of Galloway, and you reach it from Newton-Stewart by driving straight on up the valley, instead of turning to the right towards Glen Trool and its manifold beauties of loch and mountain.

Shalloch-on-Minnoch was the most famous of all the Cameronian meeting-places, not even making an exception of Friarminion near Cairntable in the Upper Ward. There is not much to be seen at Shalloch-on-Minnoch, but all the air is sacred, pregnant with history, and to stand on the Session Stone with the ranged seats opposite and the white stones of the parched burn beneath, brings the times that were in Scotland wondrously near to us.

"The Societies."

Here is William Gordon of Earlstoun's description of the famous gathering :—

"Soon we left the strange, unsmiling face of Loch Macaterick behind, and took our way towards the rocky clint, up which we had to climb. We went by the rocks that are called the Rig of Carclach, where there is a pass less steep than in other places, up to the long wild moor of Shalloch-on-Minnoch. It was a weary job getting my mother up the steep face of the gairy, for she had so many knick-knacks to carry, and so many observes to make upon the way.

"But when we got to the broad plain top of the Shalloch Hill it was easier to get forward, though at first the ground was boggy, so that we took off our stockings and walked on the driest part. We left the burn of Knocklach on our left—playing at keek-bogle among the heather and bent—now standing stagnant in pools, now rindling clear over slaty stones, and again disappearing altogether underground like a hunted Covenanter.

"As soon as we came over the brow of the hill, we could see the folk gathering. It was wonderful to watch them. Groups of little black dots moved across the green meadows in which the farm-steading of the Shalloch-on-Minnoch was set—a cheery little house, well thatched, and with a pew of blue smoke blowing from its chimney, telling of warm hearts within. Over the short brown heather of the tops the groups of wanderers came, even as we were doing ourselves—past the lonely copse at the Rowantree, over by the hillside track from Straiton, up the little runlet banks where the heather was

CLOUDS AND COASTLANDS, RASCARREL

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blushing purple, they wended their ways, all setting towards one place in the hollow. There already was gathered a black cloud of folk under the rickle of stones that runs slidingly down the steep brow of Craigfacie.

"As we drew nearer we could see the notable Session Stone, a broad, flat block overhanging the little pourie burn that tinkles and lingers among the slaty rocks, now shining bone-white in the glare of the autumn sun. I never saw a fairer place, for the heights about are good for sheep, and all the other hills distant and withdrawn. It has not, indeed, the eye-taking glorious beauty of the glen of Trool, but nevertheless it looked a very Sabbath-land of benediction and peace that day of the great Societies' Meeting.

"Upon the Session Stone the elders were already greeting one another, mostly white-headed men with dinted and furrowed faces, bowed and broken by long sojourning among the moss-hags and the caves. The Session Stone.

"When we came to the place we found the folk gathering apart for prayer, before the conference of the chosen delegates of the Societies. The women sat on plaids that had been folded for comfort. Opposite the Session Stone was a wide heathery amphitheatre, where, as on tiers of seats, rows of men and women could sit and listen to the preachers. The burnie's voice filled up the breaks in the speech, as it ran small and black with the drought, under the hollow of the bank. For, as is quite usual upon the moors, the rain and storm of the past night had not reached this side of the hill.

"I sat me down on a lichened stone and looked at the grave, well-armed men who gathered fast about the Session Stone, and on the delegates' side of the water. It was a fitting place for such a gathering, for only from the lonely brown hills above could the little cup of Conventicle be seen, nestling in the lap of the hill. And on all the moor tops that looked every way, couching torpid and drowsed in the hot sun, were to be seen the sentinels—pacing the heather like watchmen going round and telling the towers of Zion, the sun flashing on

their pikes and musket-barrels as they turned sharply, like men well-disciplined and fearless.

"The only opening was to the south-west, but even there nothing but the distant hills of Colmonell looked in upon us, blue and serene. Down in the hollow there was a glint of melancholy Loch Moan, lying all abroad among its green wet heather and stretches of yellow bent.

"What struck me as most surprising in this assembly was the entire absence of anything like concealment. From every quarter, up from the green meadows of the Minnoch Valley, over the scaurs of the Straiton hills, down past the craigs of Craigfacie, over from the deep howe of Carsphairn, streams of men came walking and riding. The sun glinted on their war-gear. Had there been a trooper within miles, upon any of the circle of the hills, the dimples of light could not have been missed. For they caught the sun and flecked the heather—as when one looks upon a sparkling sea, with the sun rising over it and each wave carrying its own glint of light with it upon its moving crest.

"As I looked, the heart within me became glad with a full-grown joy."[1]

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 314. (Isbister & Co.)

THRIEVE CASTLE

CHAPTER XV

A GLIMPSE OF BALMAGHIE IN THE TIMES OF OLD

THRIEVE CASTLE and its island are in Balmaghie, and it is quite likely that the central position of the parish, as well as the strength of the situation, may have had something to do with the choice of the warrior lords of Douglas, when they built them their "head-house and principal stronghold of the Thrave."

Thrieve Castle.

At any rate no parish was so immediately under their stern eye as Balmaghie. It was in a manner their home-farm, and the marshy nature of the ground on the Kelton side makes the tradition exceedingly probable that the great Douglas tournaments took place on the braes of Balmaghie, somewhere between the fords of Glenlochar and the green hill called Knockcannon, on which in after-times Mons Meg

was placed for the battering down of the last strength of the Douglases.

Thus were the lists closed for the tourney in the times of old.

"By ten of the clock the braes of Balmaghie were a sight most glorious to look upon. Well-nigh twelve thousand men were gathered there, of whom five thousand were well-mounted knights and fully-equipped men-at-arms, every man of them ready and willing to couch a lance or ride a charge.

"The line of the tents which had been set up extended from opposite the castle island of Thrieve to the kirk hill of Balmaghie. Every knight's following was strictly kept within its own pale, or fence of green wands set basket-wise, pointed and thrust into the earth like the spring traps of those who catch moudieworts.

"Each camp displayed the device of its own lord, but higher than all, from the top of every mound and broomy hillock floated the banner of the overlord. This was the lion of Galloway, white on a ground of blue, and beneath it, but on the same staff, a pennon whereon was the Bleeding Heart of the Douglas family.

"The lists were set up on the level meadow that is now called the Boat Croft. At either end a pavilion had been erected, and the jousting-green was strongly fenced in, with a rising tier of seats for the ladies along one side, and a throne in the midst for the Douglas himself, as high and as nobly upholstered as if the King of Scots had been presiding in person.

"At ten by the great sun-dial of Thrieve, the earl, armed in complete armour of rare Tourainian work, damascened with gold, and bearing in his hand the truncheon of commander, rode first through the fords of Lochar, and immediately after him came his brother David, a tall, handsome boy of fourteen, whose olive skin and dark high-bred beauty attested his Douglas birth.

"Next rode their cousin, the Earl of Angus, a red, foxy-featured man, with mean and shifty eyes. He sat his horse

RAVENSHALL.

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awkwardly, perpetually hunching his shoulders forward as if he feared to fall over his beast's head. And saving among his own company, no man did him any honour, which caused him to grin with wicked sidelong smiles of hate and envy.

"Then amid the shouting of the people there appeared, on a milk-white palfrey, Margaret, the earl's only sister, already famous over all Scotland as 'The Fair Maid of Galloway.'

"Behind these came the whole array of the knights and barons who owned allegiance to the Douglas—Herons and Maxwells, Ardwell Macullochs, Gordons from the Glen of Kells, with Agnews and MacDowalls from the Shireside. But above all, and outnumbering all, there were the lesser chiefs of the chief's own mighty name—Douglases of the North, the future Moray and Ormond among them, the noble young sons of James the Gross of Avondale, who rode nearest their cousin, the head of that clan. Then came Douglases of the Border, Douglases of the Hermitage, of Renfrew, of Douglasdale. Every third man in that great company which splashed and caracoled through the fords of Lochar was a William, a James, or an Archibald Douglas. The king himself could not in all Scotland have raised such a following, and it is small wonder if the heart of the young earl expanded within him.

The Tournament at Glenlochar.

"Presently, soon after the arrival of the cavalcade, the great wappenshaw was set in array, and forming up company by company the long double line extended as far as the eye could reach from north to south along the side of the broad and sluggish-moving river.

. . . . . .

"The great muster was at last over. The tents which had been dotted thickly athwart the castle island were already mostly struck, and the ground was littered with miscellaneous débris, soon to be carried off in trail carts with square wooden bodies set on boughs of trees, and flung into the river by the earl's varlets and stablemen.

"The multitudinous liegemen of the Douglas were by this

time streaming homewards along every mountain pass. Over the heather and through the abounding morasses horse and foot took their way, no longer marching in military order, as when they came, but each lance taking the route which appeared the shortest to himself. North, east, and west spear-heads glinted and armour flashed against the brown of the heather and the green of the little vales, wherein the horses bent their heads to pull at the meadow hay as their riders sought the nearest way back again to their peel-towers and forty-shilling lands.

"But the long files of horsemen threaded their way across the green plain of the isle towards the open space in front of Thrieve Castle, the points of their spears shining high in the air, and the shafts so thick underneath that, seen from a distance, they made a network of slender lines reticulated against the brightness of the sun.

"The great island strength of the Douglases was then in its highest state of perfection as a fortress and of dignity as a residence. Archibald the Grim, who built the keep, could not have foreseen the wondrous beauty and strength of which Thrieve would attain under his successors. This night of the wappenshaw the lofty grey walls were hung with gaily-coloured tapestries draped from the overhanging gallery of wood which ran round the top of the castle. From the four corners of the roof flew the banners of four provinces which owned the sway of the mighty house—Galloway, Annandale, Lanark, and the Marches, while from the centre, on a flagstaff taller than any, flew their standard royal, for so it might truly be called, the heart and stars of the Douglases' more than royal house.

"While the outer walls thus blazed with colour, the woods around gave back the constant reverberation of cannon, as with hand-guns and artillery of weight the garrison greeted the return of the earl and his guests. The green castle island was planted from end to end thick with tents and gay with pavilions of many hues and various design, their walls covered with intricate devices, and each flying the colours of its owner; while on poles without dangled shields and harness of various

kinds, ready for the younger squires to polish as their office demanded. Many of these were already at their work, and as one and another joined the throng they took up the chorus of the Douglas gathering-song :—

'Hasten ye, hasten ye! Come to the riding,
Hasten ye, hasten ye, lads of the Dee—
Douglasdale come—come Galloway, Annandale—
Galloway blades are the wale o' the three!'"[1]

[1] "The Black Douglas," p. 163. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET

CHAPTER XVI

THE KIRK KNOWE OF BALMAGHIE

But such sights have long been strange to the valley of the Dee. It is now rich with trees, pasture lands, waving crops, with here and there, peeping out, the mansions of the great. Cairnsmuir and Ben Gairn stand out south and north like blue broad-shouldered sentinels. But Castle Thrieve, tall and stark among its water meadows, though massive as of yore, is now only four walls of crumbling stone, and the Maid's bridal chamber but a ruin wherein the clamorous jackdaw may build his nest.

Leaving Glenlochar and Knockcannon on the right there is a beautiful woodland mile, passing that awkward double turn of road by Balmaghie High Lodge, the dangers of which suggested the chapter called "The Green Dook" in "The

Banner of Blue."[1] The old house of the M'Ghies of Balmaghie (often referred to in "Lochinvar"[2]) has now no existence in fact. Its place has been taken by a quite modern mansion-house. The woodlands have been extended, and there is every reason for believing that in the seventeenth century the rough, characteristically Galloway moorland country about Glentoo and the Creochs ran almost to the doors of the house itself.

Strangely enough, the Kirk of Balmaghie is situated on the very edge of the parish, most inconveniently for pastoral work, though to the advantage of the minister's quiet when preparing his sermon. All who would know more of the truth about Balmaghie Kirk must get Professor Reid's very excellent little book, "The Kirk above Dee Water." It tells of the Kirk, its ministers, of the martyrs also, and the many saintly folk who lie buried in that solitude.

The life of Macmillan, its famous minister, has been for the first time worthily written by Dr. Reid. "The Cameronian Apostle" cannot be recommended too often or too highly. It is, in my humble opinion, one of the most successful pieces of sympathetic biography ever written. And having made an attempt of the same kind in fiction, I know of what I do speak. I will return to plunder Dr. Reid's book presently. Meantime I give the words of Macmillan as they were imagined with regard to his parish.

"Balmaghie was a parish greatly to my mind (so he is represented as writing). It lies, as every one knows, in the very heart of Galloway, between the slow, placid, sylvan stretches of the Ken and the roaring, turbulent mill-race of the Black Water of Dee.

"From a worldly point of view the parish is most desirable; for though the income in money and grain is not great, nevertheless the whole amount is equal to the income of most of the smaller lairds in the neighbourhood. So at last I was settled in my parish, which was indeed a good and desirable one as times went. The manse had recently been put in order. It was a

[1] Hodder & Stoughton.

[2] Methuen.

pleasant stone house, which sat in the bieldy hollow beneath the Kirk Knowe of Balmaghie. Snug and sheltered it lay, an encampment of great beeches sheltering it from the northerly blasts, and the green-bosomed hills looking down upon it with kindly tolerant silence.

"The broad Dee Water floated silently by, murmuring a little after the rains; mostly silently, however—the water lapping against the reeds and fretting the low cavernous banks when the wind blew hard, but on the whole slipping past me with a certain large peace and attentive stateliness.

The Broad Dee Water.

"The kirk of Crossmichael sits, like that of Balmaghie, on a little green hill above Dee Water. One house of prayer fronts the other, and the white kirkyard stones greet each other across the river, telling one common story of earth to earth. And every Sabbath day across the sluggish stream two songs of praise go up to heaven in united aspiration towards one Eternal Father."

. . . . . .

"The Sabbath came—a day of infinite stillness, so that from beside the tombs of the martyr Hallidays in the kirkyard of Balmaghie you could hear the sheep bleating on the hills of Crossmichael a full mile away, the sound breaking mellow and fine upon the ear over the broad and azure river.

"To me it was like the calm of the New Jerusalem. And, indeed, no place that ever I have seen can be so blessedly quiet as the bonny kirk-knowe of Balmaghie, mirrored on a windless day in the encircling stillness of the Water of Dee.

"So, the service being ended for the day, I walked quietly over to the farm-town of Drumglass. There I found a house well furnished, oxen and kine knee-deep in the rich grass of water-meadows, hill pastures, crofts of oat and bear in the hollows about the door, and over all such an air of bien and hospitable comfort that the place fairly beckoned me to abide there."[1]

[1] "The Standard-Bearer," pp. 102, 141, 217, 231, 318. (Methuen.)

THE COAST ROAD TO CREETOWN

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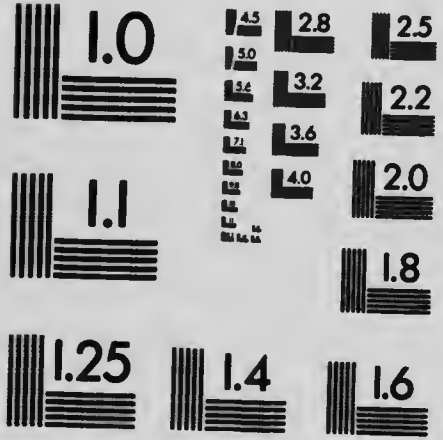

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But the minister of Balmaghie had doubtless more bitter memories of the manse and the kirk—as when, on the night of his expulsion, he looked across at the lighted windows of Crossmichael Kirk, in which his adversaries had assembled to make an end of him.

"Yet more grimly bitter than the day of December the 30th, fell the night thereof. I wandered by the bank of the river, where the sedges rustled lonely and dry by the marge, whispering and chuckling to each other because a forlorn, broken man was passing by. A 'smurr' of rain had begun to fall at the hour of dusk, and the slight ice of the morning had long since broken up. The water lisped and sobbed as the wind of winter lapped at the ripples, and the brown peat-brew of the hills took its sluggish way to the sea.

"Over against me, set on its hill, I saw the lighted windows of the kirk of Crossmichael. Well I knew what that meant. Mine enemies were sitting there in conclave. They would not rise till I was no more minister of the Kirk of Scotland."

Yet such was the temper of the Balmaghie folk that Macmillan held kirk and manse so long as it pleased him to remain.

From another place I have extracted a morning scene in the little kirkyard, a description which does not give its ordinary every-day impression, but rather one of the rarer moods in which the sense of the Unseen takes hold of us—yet perhaps a picture not less faithful on that account.

"The little kirk of Balmaghie is, as I have already mentioned, set on a hill, and from where I stood its roof and low tower were clear-cut against the crimson dawn. So red it was that, by contrast, the very tombstones took on a kind of unearthly green, as the shadowing trees waved their dead leaves, or, shaking them off, sent them balancing down. So that with the flaming light above and pale efflorescence beneath, it seemed as if the spirits of the dead went wavering upwards from their tombs, gibbering with filmy hands and moaning as they went.

"There are, indeed, moods of morning far more terrible than those of the blankest midnight—perhaps premonitory of the shuddering rigours which shall take us when the pall of the future is removed and That Day shall dawn upon us—remote, awful, glimmering with the infiniteness and possibilities that are only revealed to us in moments of mortal sickness.

A Mood of Morning.

"As I thus watched the dawn and my soul was disturbed within me, my feet turned of their own accord in the direction of the little hill-set kirk of Balmaghie. I turned about its eastern side that I might find the gravestones of the two martyr Hallidays, of which the mistress of the manse had told me the night before.

"By this time the red colour in the sky had mounted to the zenith. The sun was transmuting the lower cloud-bars to fantastic islands of purest gold. The whole pageant of the dawn stood on tiptoe, and then, all at once calming my harassed and fearful soul, I was aware of the broad Dee Water slipping along, a sea of glass mingled with fire, as it seemed, straight from the throne of God itself." [1]

To some among us Balmaghie Church appeals more nearly still. Dear dust lies in that kirkyard, and as the years pass by, for many of us, more and more of it gathers under the kirk on the hill. The tides of the world, its compulsions, its needs, and its must be's, lead me up the loaning but seldom. Indeed I am not often there, save when the beat of the passing bell calls another to the long quiet rest.

But when the years are over, many or few, and our Galloway requiem, "Sae he's won awa'," is said of me—that is the bell I should like rung. And there, in the high corner, I should like to lie, if so the fates allot it, among the dear and simple folk I knew and loved in youth. Let them lay me not far from the martyrs, where one can hear the birds crying in the minister's lilac-bushes, and Dee kissing the river grasses, as he lingers a little wistfully about the bonny green kirk-knowe of Balmaghie.

[1] "The Dark o' the Moon," p. 140. (Macmillan & Co.)

THE HEAD END OF LAURIESTON

CHAPTER XVII

SOME BALMAGHIE WORTHIES

As I write the words, there comes before me a long defile of men and women whom I have known, natives of or resident in the parish of Balmaghie. Of mine own I will say nothing, though they too were held of the worthiest, save of William Crockett, so lately of Glenlochar, swiftly carried off by a fever caught in the discharge of his duty, and followed to an honoured grave by the sincere mourning of a whole countryside, leaving a name of an enduring sweet savour for simple truth, justice, and loyalty.

Of a few others I have spoken elsewhere, notably in the chapters of this book entitled Four Galloway Farms.

As characters, I do not think that any in all Galloway impressed my boyish mind so much as the three Laurieston old maids, Mary, Jennie, and Jean M'Haffie. I have written of them time and again.

The M'Haffies.

Hardly ever did I go to church without making up to the three brave little old maids, who, leaving a Free Kirk

at their very door, and an Established one over the hill, made their way seven long miles to the true Kirk of the Persecutions.

It had always, I think, been a grief to them that there was no Lag to make them testify up to the chin in Solway tide, or with a great fiery match between their fingers to burn them to the bone. But what they could, they did. They trudged fourteen miles every Sabbath day, with their dresses "feat and snod" and their linen like the very snow, to listen to the gospel preached according to their consciences. They were all the smallest of women, but their hearts were great, and those who knew them held them far more worthy of honour than all the lairds of the parish.

Of them all only one remains.[1] But their name and honour shall not be forgotten on Deeside while fire burns and water runs, if this biographer can help it. The M'Haffies were all distinguished by their sturdy independence, but Jen M'Haffie was ever the cleverest with her head. A former parish minister had once mistaken Jen for a person of limited intelligence; but he altered his opinion after Jen had taken him through-hands upon the Settlement of "Aughty-nine" (1689), when the Cameronians refused to enter into the Church of Scotland as reconstructed by the Revolution Settlement.

The three sisters kept a little shop which the two less active tended; while Mary, the business woman of the family, resorted to Cairn Edward every Monday and Thursday with and for a miscellaneous cargo. As she plodded the weary way, she divided herself between conning the sermons of the previous Sabbath, arranging her packages, and anathematising the cuddy. "Ye person—ye awfu' person!" was her severest denunciation.

Billy was a donkey of parts. He knew what houses to call at. It is said that he always brayed when he had to pass the Established manse, in order to express his feelings. But in spite of this Billy was not a true Cameronian. It was always suspected that he could not be much more than

[1] Alas, no more even one!

LOOKING WEST ON THE GATEHOUSE ROAD

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Cameronian by marriage—a "tacked-on one," in short. His walk and conversation were by no means so straightforward as those of one sound in the faith ought to have been. It was easy to tell when Billy and his cart had passed along the road, for his tracks did not go forward, like all other wheel-marks, but meandered hither and thither across the road, as though he had been weaving some intricate web of his own devising. He was called the Laurieston Express, and his record was a mile and a quarter an hour, good going.

The Laurieston Express.

Mary herself was generally tugging at him to come on. She pulled Billy, and Billy pulled the cart. But, nevertheless, in the long run, it was the will of Billy that was the ultimate law. The School Boy was very glad to have the M'Haffies taken up on the cart, both because he was allowed to walk all the time, and because he hoped to get Mary into a good temper against next Tuesday.

Mary came his way twice a week—on Tuesdays and Fridays. As the School Boy plodded along towards school he met her, and, being allowed by his granny one penny to spend at Mary's cart, he generally occupied most of church time, and all the school hours for a day or two before, in deciding what he would buy.

It did not make choice any easier that alternatives were strictly limited. While he was slowly and laboriously making up his mind as to the long-drawn-out merits of four farthing biscuits, the way that "halfpenny Abernethies" melted in the mouth arose before him with irresistible force. And just as he had settled to have these, the thought of charming explorations after the currants in a couple of "cookies" was really too much for him. Again, the solid and enduring charms of a penny "Jew's roll," into which he could put his lump of butter, often entirely unsettled his mind at the last moment. The consequence was that he had always to make up his mind in the immediate presence of the objects, and by that time neither Billy nor Mary could brook any very long delays.

It was important, therefore, on Sabbaths, to propitiate Mary as much as possible, so that she might not cut him short and proceed on her way without supplying his wants, as she had done more than once before. On that occasion her words were these—

"D'ye think Mary M'Haffie has naething else in the world to do, but stan' still as lang as it pleases you to gawp there! Gin ye canna tell us what ye want, ye can e'en do withoot! Gee up, Billy! Come oot o' the roadside—ye're aye eat-eatin', ye bursen craitur ye!"

Professor Reid will, I know, pardon me for "lifting" what I wrote long ago in the preface of his "Kirk Above Dee Water," concerning the M'Haffies, and about another Galloway worthy, equally widely known, David M'Quhae.

"Who that remembers the Crossmichael road as it goes over the knowes by Sandfield, or the long Glenlochar 'straight mile' where it turns off by the thirteen lums of the 'lang raw' (it is thirteen, is it not?) can drive along these far-reaching vistas on Monday nights, without expecting to come upon Mary's erratic cart, with Mary herself tug-tugging at Billy's obstinate head, hauling him behind her by main force up the brae? Do we not still hear, midway up the Balniaghie woods, the clip of her emphatic tongue, 'O Billy, ye awesome person! Ye are no worth a preen—ye feckless, greedy, menseless seefer, ye! Stand up there frae that bank! Did onybody ever see the like o' ye?' Or can we not recall seeing Mary pat-pattering in and out of the Castle-Douglas shops upon the day of the Monday market? With what invincible accuracy did she not rap out her commands over the counter, always concluding with, 'And I'll be back for the parcels at three o'clock *preceese*—sae see an' hae them ready to lift, and dinna keep me an' Billy waitin'.'

"Then again in the little shop on the long whitewashed Laurieston street, do we not remember how Jean and Jennie (I think in later years Jean alone) sat at the receipt of custom? No light thing to go in there for a quarter of tea! It was an enterprise over which an hour might be very profit-

ably spent—and not a moment wasted either. Such high discourse as there was upon the 'fundamentals' and the 'deeveesions' of Mr. Symington's or Mr. Kay's last sermon at the Cameronian Kirk of Castle-Douglas. Or it might be a word of canny advice to the young and innocent—'Laddie, dinna ... be ower keen to be takkin' up wi' the lasses—they are ... feckless, fleein' heverals, the young yins noo-a-days. Noo, in my young days——'

"Whereupon would follow a full and specific account of the immense superiority of 'my young days,' and specially a very unfavourable comparison of the modesty and humility of the 'lasses langsyne' with the forwardness and pertness of 'thae daft young hizzies' of to-day.

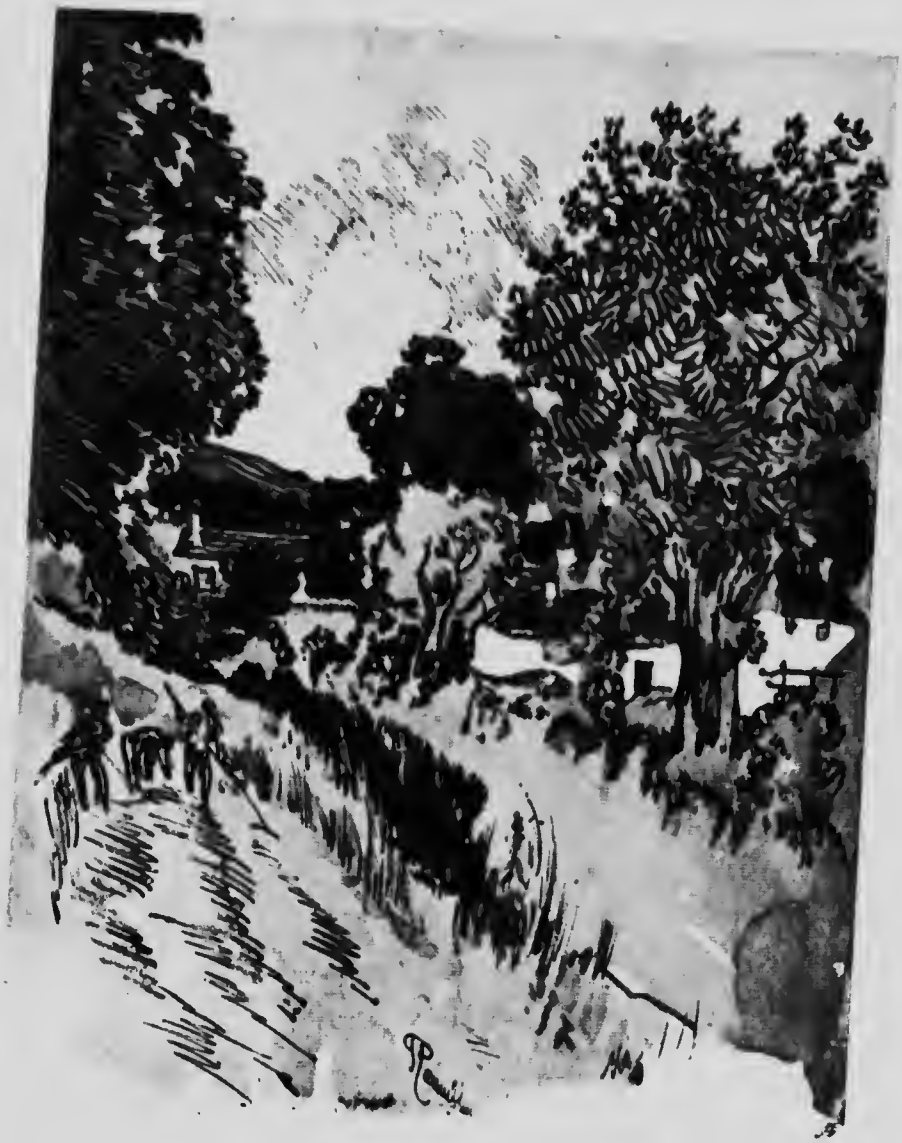
"Then but-and-ben with the M'Haffies, one might find David M'Quhae, a very fine type of Galloway man, a mighty fisher of fish, a trustworthy squire of dames, full of courtesy and kindliness, a perfect God-send to a wandering or truant boy. None like David could busk a fly, or give advice as to soft bait. He carried about with him, besides, much of the savour of an older time, when the relations of life were simpler and all men walked closer to one another. David had been a strong Tory of the old sort all his life, yet he went about breathing a simple equality akin to the original democracy of Eden. As a rival used severely to say of him—'He was nae mair feared to speak to the laird or the minister than to ony ither man!' And from that little house on the brae what examples of consistent living and good kirk-going went forth. From the one end went the three old maids, six long miles to Castle-Douglas, each with her Bible and her neatly-folded Sabbath handkerchief. They went to hear 'the Word of God properly preached' in the Kirk of the Hill Folk, which had never fyled its hands with 'an Erastian Establishment!'

David M'Quhae.

"From the other end went forth David, and it might be one or two dear to him, equally strong in their own faith and equally walking in the good way. In amity Auld Kirk and Cameronian dwelt together but-and-ben all the week.

But on the Sabbath coined money would not have made them sit down and worship in each other's sanctuaries. All Scottish history is in the fact. Wet or dry, hail or shine, plashing Lammas flood or wreathed snow, David M'Quhae went his good four miles over the wild moor to his beloved Kirk of Balmaghie, the history of which has been written by one whose knowledge is infinitely greater than mine. My friend, Dr. Reid, has much to tell of faithful ministers, of worthy elders, and of silent, attentive flocks. But I am sure he can speak of none more loyal, more conscientious, than David M'Quhae of Laurieston."[1]

[1] From the Foreword to Dr. H. M. B. Reid's "The Kirk Above Dee Water."



LAURIESTON

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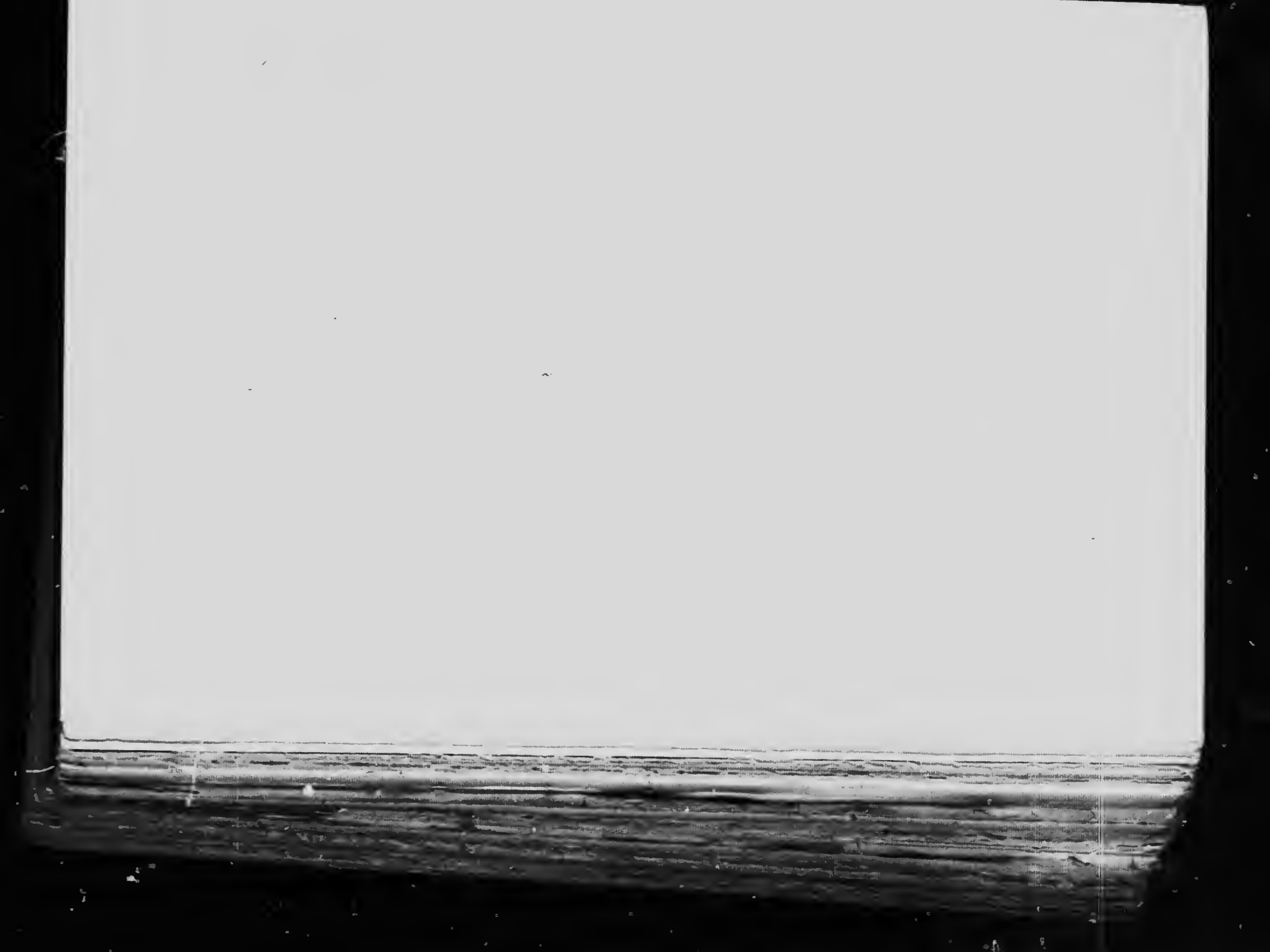

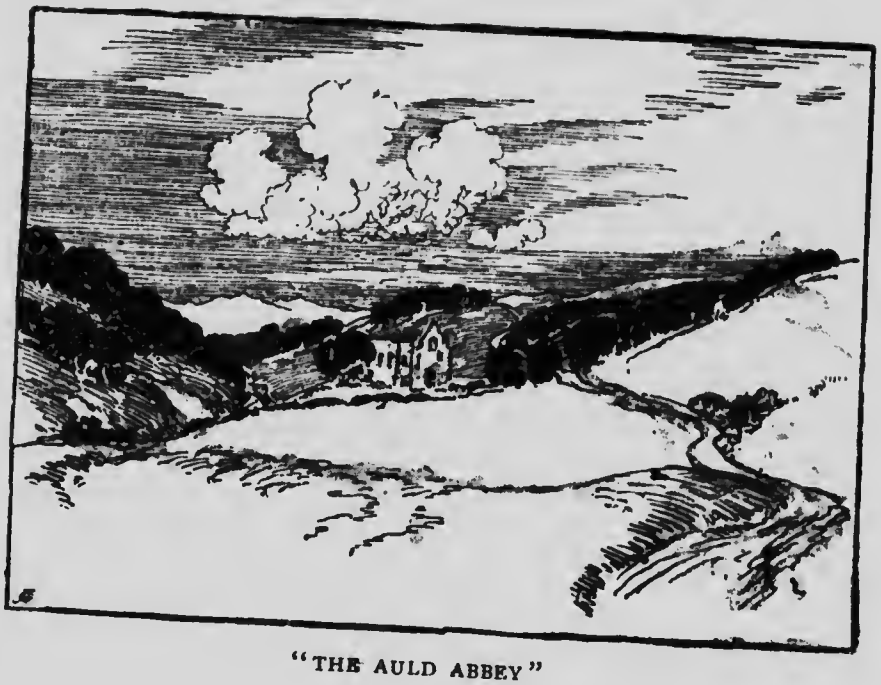

"THE AULD ABBEY"

CHAPTER XVIII

WOODHALL LOCH

It is vain, I fear, to call it Grenoch—as it should be called. A certain name-changing fiend brought into our Erse and Keltic Galloway a number of mongrel names, probably some Laird Laurie with a bad education and a plentiful lack of taste, who, among other iniquities, called the ancient Clachan-of-Pluck after himself—Laurieston. His mansion-house he changed from the ancient and honourable "Grenoch," by which name it stands in Pont's map of (about) 1611, to the commonplace Woodhall. Later the loch had a like fortune. Loch Grenoch becam Woodhall Loch (or in the folk speech of the parish, W ha' Loch). Farther afield we have a crop, happily thin so . and soon fading away, of Summerhills, Parkhills, Willowbanks, and such like—of which that most to be regretted is the merging of the ancient name of the Duchrae estate in that of the

Barbarisms.

mansion-house of Hensol, a word which has no historical connection with Galloway, but merely preserves a souvenir of the early youth of a late proprietor.

But Woodhall Loch (after you have become accustomed to the barbarism) smells as sweet, and its water ripples as freshly as ever did that of Loch Grenoch—which at least is some comfort.

Setting out northward away from Laurieston, there lie before you five miles of the most changefully beautiful road in Scotland, every turn a picture, and in the season every bank a wonder of flowers. If the journey is prolonged to the borough of New Galloway itself, the marvel becomes only the more marvellous, the changes only the more frequent. I have heard an artist say that a lifetime might be judiciously spent in painting those ten miles of road without once leaving the highway, and yet the painter need never repeat his effect.

The first mile to the beginning of the loch itself is through scenery curiously reminiscent of some parts of central France—the valley of the Creuse, for instance, George Sand's country—or some of the lower tributaries of the Tarn. The tall poplars in front of the ruined smithy, the little burn that trips and ambles for a few hundred paces beside the traveller and then is lost, hurrying off into the unknown again as if tired of being overlooked—all these are more French than Scottish.

Myriads of wild flowers throng on every side, at all seasons of the year when wild flowers can be found in Scotland—indeed many even in winter.

But as I write I am reminded that remarkable and historical events happened close to this place where now we pause to look about us.

Greystone.

The house to the right among the trees is Greystone, which in the days of my youth boasted a genuine ghost—a Lady in White who walked up and down among the trees, chiefly by moonlight, when I took care not to be in the neighbourhood. Besides which, the owner and builder of the beautifully fitted mills, barns, outhouses, ponds—a certain General J——, much held in awe by all

schoolboys, used to come on Sundays with a gay company and a team of four horses, and depart (as we boys firmly believed) with a forked tail hid under his coat, and leaving in his Sabbath-breaking wake a faint but unmistakable odour of brimstone.

Greystone, or North Quintainespie, was never finished in the builder's lifetime. The exquisite machinery rusted in the mills and barns. Not a wheel ever turned. Not a sheaf of corn was ever thrashed. The byres and stables stood locked and silent till a later and better day arose, when ghosts were laid and Greystone became no more a marvel, but only one home among many. But at the time the place feared us more than the minister's sermons, or even the crack of the schoolmaster's dog-whip.

Here too, at the beginning of these better days, came a certain small Sweetheart of mine to do her messages, deliver her orders, drink her drink of milk, and return in haste to her own. And on that dusty road a certain "Heart of Gold" was abased—abased in order to be exalted, tried, and proven, all which is written in the book called "Sweetheart Travellers," and need not be repeated here.

Farther along is Blates Mill, where (so they tell me) one Leeb M'Lurg put up her remarkable notice concerning eggs, and held her siege against her weazel-faced uncle Tim, ere the bull did its ultimate justice upon him.

Yet a little farther on, its branches bent by the furious blasts from the loch, stands at an angle of the road, the famous Bogle Thorn. It seems somehow to have shrunk and grown commonplace since I used to pass it at a run, with averted eyes, in the winter gloamings on my way home from school.

Then it had for me the most tragic suggestions. A man, so they said, had hanged himself upon it at some unknown period. He was to be seen, evident against the drear dusk, a-swing from the topmost branches, blowing out in the blast like a pair of trousers hung up to dry, or Dante's empty souls in the winds of Hades.

The Bogle Thorn.

Recently, however, I was glad to notice that Sweetheart had not forgotten the old thrill of fear as we passed it on cycle-back, its limbs black and spidery against a waning moon.

"In an incautious moment, once upon a time, I had informed Sweetheart that on the branches of that tree, in years long past, when I used to trudge past it on foot, there used to be seen little green men, moping and mowing. So every time we pass that way Sweetheart requires the story without variations. Not a single fairy must be added or subtracted. Now, it happens that the road goes uphill at the Bogle Thorn, and to remember a fairy tale which one has made up the year before last, and at the same time to drive a tricycle with a great girl of five thereon, is not so easy as sleeping. So, most unfortunately, I omit the curl of a green monkey's tail in my recital, which a year ago had made an impression upon a small girl's accurate memory. And her reproachful accent as she says, 'Oh, father, you are telling it *all* different,' carries its own condemnation with it."[1]

Woodhall Loch is like many another. Half its beauty is in the seeing eye. Yet not only the educated or the intellectual may see. At the close of this chapter, I will quote what feelings were excited in the breast of a country lout by the solemnities of night as viewed from the Crae Bridge.

But for others who think more of themselves than did Ebie Farrish the ploughman, the art of admiring nature is chiefly a matter of habit and leisure. The scytheman, the ploughman, the lowland hind, even the ordinary farmer, see little of the mysteries that Nature in the midst of which they work, dull-eyed as the browsing bullocks.

The man of the hills is vastly different. There are few shepherds insensible to the glamour of the mountains and the strange wild poetry of their occupation. But to the lover, the poet, to the intelligent townsman all things seem to speak. Ralph Peden, the city divinity student, lying well content under a thorn-bush above the loch, drew in that heather-scent which makes the bees tipsy and sets the grass-

[1] "Sweetheart Travellers," p. 224. (Wells Gardner, Darton, & Co.)

THE SHORES OF LOCH KEN

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hoppers chirring in the long grass by the lochside. It caused a glamour to come into his head also, in spite of all the philosophies.

I know a bank, where the wild thyme grows—with an infinitude of other things. You will find it past Blates Mill, past the Bogle Thorn, just where the loch opens out, and when, standing on tiptoe at the side of the road, you can see far away, set on the selvage of the northern moorland, the chimneys of the Duchrae.

Now look down. Between you and the rippling water what a blaze of colour! You will hardly find such a wealth of flowers anywhere else in Galloway. The loch, alternate white and blue according as the sunlight or the breeze catches it, stretches away for all its length of three miles, cloud and firwood mirroring themselves upon it. If it be June, the first broad rush of the ling will already be climbing the slopes of the Crae Hill opposite to you—a pale lavender near the loch-side, deepening to crimson on the dryer slopes where the heath-bells grow shorter and stand thicker together. At the upper end of the loch, scarcely yet in view, the wimpling Lane of Duchrae glides away as discreetly from the sleeping lake as if it were eloping and feared to wake an angry parent. The whole range of hill and wood and water is drenched in sunlight. Yet everywhere silence clothes it like a garment, and the wind that blows hither and thither is sweet with the wild free scent of the moors.

I cannot even pretend to catalogue the flowers one may hope to find here—I had almost said, at all times of the year. The outrush of golden yellow across these braes, gorse and whin, pranked like a gay lady, gave me my first sense of gladness in nature. I used to hurrah all the way home from school, just because everything—the banks, the knowes, the roadside, all were of the glad-some yellow. It was my true age of gold, and even now some-thing throbs in my throat as I think of it. It was the head-time of all the year—that and the long rush through the spring grass, when, for the first time, stockings were taken off, and the

Flower-land.

bare white feet felt the cool thresh of the close-set herbage, soft and moist and velvety.

It is true that merely to have bought and to have read so much of "Raiderland"—a book wholly given up to the seeing of the eye, argues an intelligence in the reader wholly different from that of Ebie Farrish, the ploughman. But still it will do no harm to remember that, with such beauties ready to her hand, Nature does work its mysterious work on the dullest and most animal of human beings.

Ebie has been "night-raking," as it is expressly called in Galloway, and now is on his way back to his own proper couch.

"But returning home in the coolness of this night, the ploughman was, for the time being, purged of the grosser humours which come naturally to strong, coarse natures, with physical frames ramping with youth and good feeding. He stood long looking into the Lane water, which glided beneath the bridge and away down to the Dee without a sound.

"He noted where, on the broad bosom of the loch, the stillness lay grey and smooth like glimmering steel, with little puffs of night wind purling across it, and disappearing like breath from a new knife-blade. He saw also where the smooth satin plain rippled to the first water-break, as the stream collected itself, deep and black, with the force of the current behind it, to flow beneath the arch. When Ebie Farrish came to the bridge he was no more than a material Galloway ploughman, satisfied with his night's conquests and chewing the cud of their memory.

"He looked over. He saw the stars, which were perfectly reflected a hundred yards away on the smooth expanse, first waver, then tremble, and lastly break into a myriad delicate shafts of light, as the water quickened and gathered. He spat in the water, and thought of trout for breakfast. But the long roar of the rapids of the Dee came to him over the hill, and brought a feeling of stillness with it, weird and remote. Uncertain lights shot hither and thither under the bridge, in strange gleams and reflections. The ploughman was awed.

He continued to gaze. The stillness closed in upon him. The aromatic breath of the pines seemed to cool him and remove him from himself. He had a sense that it was the Sabbath morning, and that he had just washed his face to go to church. It was the nearest thing to worship he had ever known. Such moments come to the most material, and are their theology. Far off a solitary bird whooped and whinnied. It sounded mysterious and unknown, the cry of a lost soul. Ebie Farrish wondered where he would go to when he died. He thought this over for a little, and then he concluded that upon the whole it were better not to dwell on that subject. But the crying on the lonely hills awed him. It was only a Jack snipe, from whose belated nest an owl had stolen two eggs. Nevertheless it was Ebie Farrish's good angel. Of a truth there was that in the world which had not been there before for him. And it is to his sweetheart's credit, that when Ebie was most impressed by the stillness and most under the spell of the night, he thought of her. He was only an ignorant, godless, dull-natured man, who was no more moral than he could help. But it is both a testimonial and a compliment when such a man thinks of a woman in his best and most solemn moments.

"A trout leaped in the calm water, and Ebie stopped thinking of the eternities to remember where he had baited a line. Far off a cock crew, and the well-known sound warned Ebie that he had better be drawing near his bed. He raised himself from the copestone of the parapet, and solemnly tramped his steady way up to the 'onstead' of Craig Ronald, which took shape before him on the height as he advanced like a low, grey-bastioned castle."[1]

[1] "The Lilac Sunbonnet," p. 168. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

THE TINKLER'S LOUP

CHAPTER XIX

THE LEVELLERS' COUNTRY

If we leave Laurieston on some still summer evening in the slack between hay and harvest, the Galloway moors will rise before us in long purple ridges to the west. The sun has set, and in the hollows pools of mist are gathering, islanded with clumps of willow. The "maister" has made his nightly rounds, and is now meditatively taking his smoke, leaning on the gate at the head of the loaning, and looking over a green cornfield, through the raw colour of which the first yellow is beginning to glimmer. "From the village half a mile away he can hear the clink of the smith's anvil. A little farther on, past a well of delicious water, we come to the mill. M'Lurg's Mill, where the children lived, was a tumbledown erection, beautiful for situation, set on the side of the long loch of Kenick. The house had once been a little farmhouse, its windows brilliant with geraniums and verbenas; but in the latter days of the forlorn M'Lurgs it had become betrampled as to its doorsteps by lean swine, and bespattered as to its broken floor by intrusive hens.

"The mill has now recovered its attractiveness, and shines

white above the loch. In the bright June meadows the hemlock has not yet been overtopped by the meadow-sweet, as in a week or two it will be. Below lies the loch, rippleless and azure as the blue of a jay's wing. The air from off the heather is warm and honey-scented."[1]

Beyond Blatesmill we are at once in the Levellers' country. Few movements were more foolish, more hopeless, but at the same time more eminently Scottish and sympathetic than this. It was the uprising of the helpless Many against the strong Few, and though defeated and well-nigh forgotten, it contains the root-matter of many modern and world-wide problems.

The movement extended all over Galloway, but was brought to a close in the Duchrae wood, where at the turning of the road, before coming in sight of New Galloway Station, the travellers must climb up a steep bank to find "the Roman Camp —which is no Roman camp, but the last entrenchments of the Levellers in Galloway. There is a deep ditch, much overgrown, a wide mound, and a gap through which, in my own day, the waters of the ditch were let out, to facilitate the escape of the Duchrae bull! Jock had fallen into the ditch and for days his roarings were heard afar, long before any could locate his place of imprisonment. He was up to the dewlap in water, therefore not at all thirsty. But he had eaten all the leaves of the trees within reach, and even tried the gorse and bramble on the nearer slopes.

"The Roman Cam

But the Levellers of Galloway deserve more than a passing notice. About 1720 the same thing was happening in the Lowlands which happened a quarter of a century later in the Highlands. The common folk of Galloway recognised, indeed, that the land belonged in some sort to the lairds, but they had not got rid of the ancient idea that it was held by the chief of the sept or clan, in trust for his people. Especially was this so with regard to the moors and wide unenclosed hills incapable of cultivation. These had always been considered common grazing ground for the poor folks' sheep and cattle, and every

[1] "The Stickit Minister," pp. 114, 205, 220. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

little valley and green gusset of meadow-land sheltered its croft or holding where in times gone by a family had squatted, and by centuries of labour had won a few scanty "grass parks" from the surrounding wilderness of bog and heather.

But all was now changed. The lairds were no more of the people. They had taken the side of what all Galloway considered as an alien and persecuting sect, during the reigns of the second Charles and James his brother. Thus in most cases they had been divorced in sympathy from the clan or sept with which they were lineally connected.

Add to this that many of the original landlords had either been dispossessed as disloyal to one party or the other during the long troubles, or had been driven to sell their lands to strangers from a distance. Hardly ever had this property returned into the hands of a Galloway man of aboriginal stock.

The new-comers, of course, considered these settlers and hillside crofters simply as so many encumbrances. They set their lawyers to work, and, soon discovering that the poor folk possessed no claims to their little holdings (save that of having entirely created them, built up every stone and sod of offices and dwelling-house, and cultivated in peace their two or three scanty parks and meadows of rough grass for centuries), proceeded to clear their borders of them and all their works.

A few of the more kindly disposed—having human hearts within them—gave sites whereon the dispossessed were permitted to erect other cottages, huddled more closely together. And this was the origin of several of our most notable Galloway villages of to-day. But the greater landlords did not desire any such settlements near their borders, regarding them solely as refuges for the disaffected, or at least as nurseries of poaching, smuggling, and general unprofitableness.

So the edict "To be Banished Furth of Scotland" began to figure at every court of justice, at which the least resistance to enclosure was reported. And poor families, expelled from their little cottages, had to wander into England or endeavour to find some ship's captain, who, in return for the right to dispose of their services in the colonies for a period of five

years, was willing, as a speculation, to transport them to Massachusetts, Connecticut, or the growing settlement of New Amsterdam, farther to the south.

NEAR THE TINKLER'S LOUP

But naturally there were many—young fellows of high heart and courage—accustomed to the use of rude weapons and with muscles hardened by field labour, who could not be brought tamely to submit. And when the more militant landlords, by arrangement with the Government, proceeded to carry out the policy of "Thorough," naturally enough also they had to face such roving bands, officered frequently by some old Covenanter who had trudged into Edinburgh to defend the

Convention of '89 against the troopers of Clavers and the more dangerous parchment bonds of the Bluidy Mackenzie.

But there was little chance, unless a true leader chanced to appear, to draw the Levellers into some kind of cohesion, that they could make any head against regular soldiers. And in the meantime there were many searchings of heart and waggings of head throughout the wilds of Galloway, when the "hated red-coats" were again seen crossing the moors to visit a solitary cothouse, or beating the heather-bushes and searching the moss-hags for some celebrated fugitive.

As an old Cameronian meditated, looking down from his herding on the side of the Bennan Hill, and watching the scarlet jackets of the dragoons filing up the side of the Loch of Ken, he might say, "Verily do I remember what guid Maister Alexander Peden, that remarkable seer of things to come, prophesied, as I myself heard him by the thorn-buss o' Friarminion, 'A bluidy Sword for Thee, O Scotland, that shall pierce to the hearts of many! Many miles shall ye travel, and see nothing but desolation and ruinous wastes. Mony a conventicle has God weared on thee, puir Scotland, but now God will make a covenant with thee that will make the world tremble!'"[1]

"Incomers."

For the credit of Galloway be it said that the chief of these oppressors were incomers and Englishmen. Now these gentlemen, eager for progress and diligent to lay field to field, forgot in their haste that measures which had succeeded well enough with the more obedient and servile peasantry of the southern English shires, were foredoomed to failure with a population so fierce and turbulent as that of Galloway—the natural wildness of whose nature had received a stern and solemn twist in the direction of fanaticism from the ill-judged severity of the second Charles and his brother James.

In these religious struggles the local lairds had, with but few exceptions, separated themselves from the common folk, and,

[1] "The Dark o' the Moon," chapter xxix. (Macmillan & Co.)

instead of taking the hills with Peden and Alexander Gordon, had chosen to remain and drink to the death of rebels and the confusion of all Whigs, in company with rough-riding Lag and Captain Windram—that admirable, hard-drinking, six-bottle man who at Kirdcudbright commanded in the interests of King Charles the Second's right to appoint bishops over the flock of God in Scotland.

And now, fifty years afterwards, the Galloway lairds were paying the penalty for the sins of their predecessors. And part of the price—the first instalment, as it were—was to be paid on the night of the Muster of Rascarrel.

"It was a curious sight, and one long memorable in the annals of cothouse and farm-ingle.

"The cross-roads of Rascarrel were no more than the meeting-place of two green tracks that wimpled and lingered among the heather, by day a little greener and smoother on either side, and in the midst worn more rough and red by the plunging hooves of cattle and the pattering trotters of droving sheep; but by night scarce to be distinguished from the leagues of circumambient heather.

"But there was a great boulder in one of the angles made by the meeting ways, which gave the place its alternative name of 'the Standing Stanes of Rascarrel.'

"The gathering was not without a certain rude pomp of its own. High on the standing stone was seated a figure dressed in a strange garb, looking, in the flickering light of torches, and the brief glimpses of the moon as the fleecy clouds scudded across her face, like a monstrous witch playing before the Master of Witches himself.

"A huge poke-bonnet covered features, which, moreover, were carefully blackened, and the whole figure was wrapped in a ludicrous parody of feminine attire, designed in sackcloth or the bags in which meal was carried to market. And this Witch of Endor, high placed above the throng, elbowed and smirked as with infinite lilt of grace-notes borrowed from the Celtic pipes, she played 'The tailor fell through the bed, needles an' a',' 'The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes,' 'The

Wind that shakes the Barley,' and other fast-running, jigging tunes.

"Thereafter the chosen leader of the Levellers, one Captain Dick, initiated the remaining divisions of his forces into the secret and mystery of the 'ox poles.' Two or three of these were to be lashed firmly together. A company of twenty or thirty able-bodied rebels was told off, ten to each pole. Then at a given word the whole of these were to put forth their strength as one man, and the hated fences would be levelled with the ground. This they pledged themselves to do as often as the landlord continued to rebuild them.

Levellers at Work.

"At last they stood at the place where the campaign was to begin. The laird's new drystone dyke stretched away east and west, looming up under the clouded moon vast as the Great Wall of China—though, indeed, it was in no place much more than six or seven feet high.

"In silence the Levellers took their places, swank young herds and horny-fisted working-women of the fields, all attired in the same absurd and outlandish costume. They manifested the utmost confidence in their leader, and obeyed his orders without scruple. Probably this would not have been the case had the men concerned in the affairs been the elders of the cause. But as most were young, and the element of adventure entered largely into their motives, they were ready without question to follow so gallant a captain wherever he wished to lead them.

"'Order out the bars!' cried Dick of the Isle.

"The huge poles were placed in position behind the dykes.

"'Man the bars!'

"Thirty of the Levellers set themselves in position to push simultaneously.

"'When I say three—let go, all!—One, Two, Three!'

"'And over she goes!' chorussed the Levellers hoarsely at the word.

"The huge, sky-mounting ridge of newly-built dyke, not

yet settled down on its foundations, swayed a moment uncertainly, a few stones toppled over upon the feet of the attacking force, and then with a slow, majestic bend, almost like that of a breaking wave, a furlong of it fell over in one piece, with a far-resounding crash, and lo! the green hillside again stretched from horizon to horizon unbroken under the moon."[1]

When Mr. Cuninghame visited Hensol sixty years after the troubles, he found the traditions of the last defence of the Levellers against the king's troops still fresh in the memories of the countryside. The story seems to have been told him by the M'Clellans, who were then tenants of the Duchrae. So that there is little doubt of its general accuracy, though possibly in sixty years some frills may have been added to the narrative. About two points, however, there is a manifest agreement. First, the place of final defence was the Duchrae Moat Wood. And, secondly, the commander of the regular troops was very lenient to the Levellers—much more so than the lairds and "enclosers" of the time approved of.

The general disposition of the Camp of the Levellers is thus told (imaginatively) by one who viewed it from the Crae Hill opposite:—

"Captain Tredennis could discern a line of sentinels drawn from a point a little below the stepping-stones by which he had crossed up to Mount Pleasant, a wooded hill, bare at the top, overlooking the Cave and the head of the Loch of Grenoch. Beneath he could see in its completeness the camp in the wood. The situation was naturally a strong one—that is, if, as was most likely, it had to be attacked only by cavalry or by an irregular force operating without artillery.

"In front the Grenoch Lane was still and deep, with a bottom of treacherous mud. Swamps encircled it to the north, while behind there was a good mile of broken ground, with frequent marshes and moss-hags. Save where the top of the camp mound was cleared to admit of the scanty brushwood huts and patchwork tents

The Last Stand.

[1] "The Dark o' the Moon," chapter xiv. (Macmillan & Co.)

of the Levellers, the whole position was further covered (and defended) by a perfect jungle of bramble, whin, thorn, sloe, and hazel, through which paths had been opened in all directions to the best positions of defence.

"Here and there, out on the opener country towards the east, where the camp was not defended by the river and marshes, the king's officer could see that trenches had been made and earthworks raised, with loopholes regularly constructed of wood and stone for the defenders to fire upon any assailant. The main camp itself was encircled with a *fosse* very wide and deep, but even from his elevated station on the side of the opposite hill Austin Tredennis could see nothing of the immediate defences of the position.

"The eminence on which the main fortifications had been erected rose high above his head, and he could only look up the steep slope and observe that it had been carefully levelled to form a glacis, and furnished with earthen bastions at the corner to provide stances for cross-fire in case of direct assault.

"Down on a little smooth piece of meadow within the outer lines, yet convenient to the water-edge, several great fires were burning. Sometimes Austin could almost feel the warmth of the blaze as great quantities of fresh brushwood were continually thrown on. It was, after all, a kind of play to many of these lads, and scores of them laboured incessantly, joking and laughing as they did so, at bringing dried wood, branches, heather roots, and other light fuel to add to the flames—oftentimes even embarrassing the cooks by their endeavours, and in one case actually setting fire to the tripod upon which the stewpot was swinging.

"Upon a felled tree which formed part of the defence on the land side a group of older men was seated, talking soberly together, evidently discussing plans, and, in the intervals of speech, cleaning such arms as they possessed.

"Tredennis was astonished to see how many excellent pieces there were in the hands of the Levellers. He did not know that the folk of Scotland, like the Spaniards, were naturally an armed people, security having only of late come into these

northern straths. In addition to the guns, there were smugglers' jocktelegs, made longer than had been intended by the original Jacques de Liége, whose name was still stamped on the blades. These were possessed by all, but some had also whingers, or short swords like cutlasses, while pistols of all kinds were common, from the miniature article made to swing at a horseman's wrist so as not to interfere with the reins or break his sword-stroke in a charge, up to the mighty horse-pistol with its bell mouth and charge of powder like a blunderbuss. He noted, also, the pitchforks and Irish pikes brought by a few of the Wigtonshire men, while as an additional weapon of offence many of the lads had mounted the prongs of a pitchfork upon the muzzles of their guns, in such a way as not to interfere with the firing of the piece, forming a rude but highly effective sort of bayonet.

"Presently there came again the bugle signal from the Levellers' headquarters upon the summit of the main camp, and therefore out of sight of Tredennis. At the sound there ensued a great running to and fro, and crying of names and numbers, all which diverted him exceedingly. Then, in a trice, and with an alacrity which the old soldier could not but admire, the men fell into messes of about ten, and rations were served out.

"There was a hot word or two occasionally among the younger men, evidently having relation to charges of unfair division, which could hardly fail to occur when so large a portion of the provender consisted of the rabbits which abound all about the Duchrae Bank, and scurry and patter within the limits of the camp itself."[1]

How the Levellers fought and escaped may be read in the final chapters of "The Dark o' the Moon"—where the conclusion of the matter is described with some truth and accuracy, save in that which concerns Silver Sand, whose history (I write the words with regret) is entirely of the imagination.

[1] "The Dark o' the Moon," chap. xliv. (Macmillan & Co.)

LOOKING UP THE LOCH KEN

CHAPTER XX

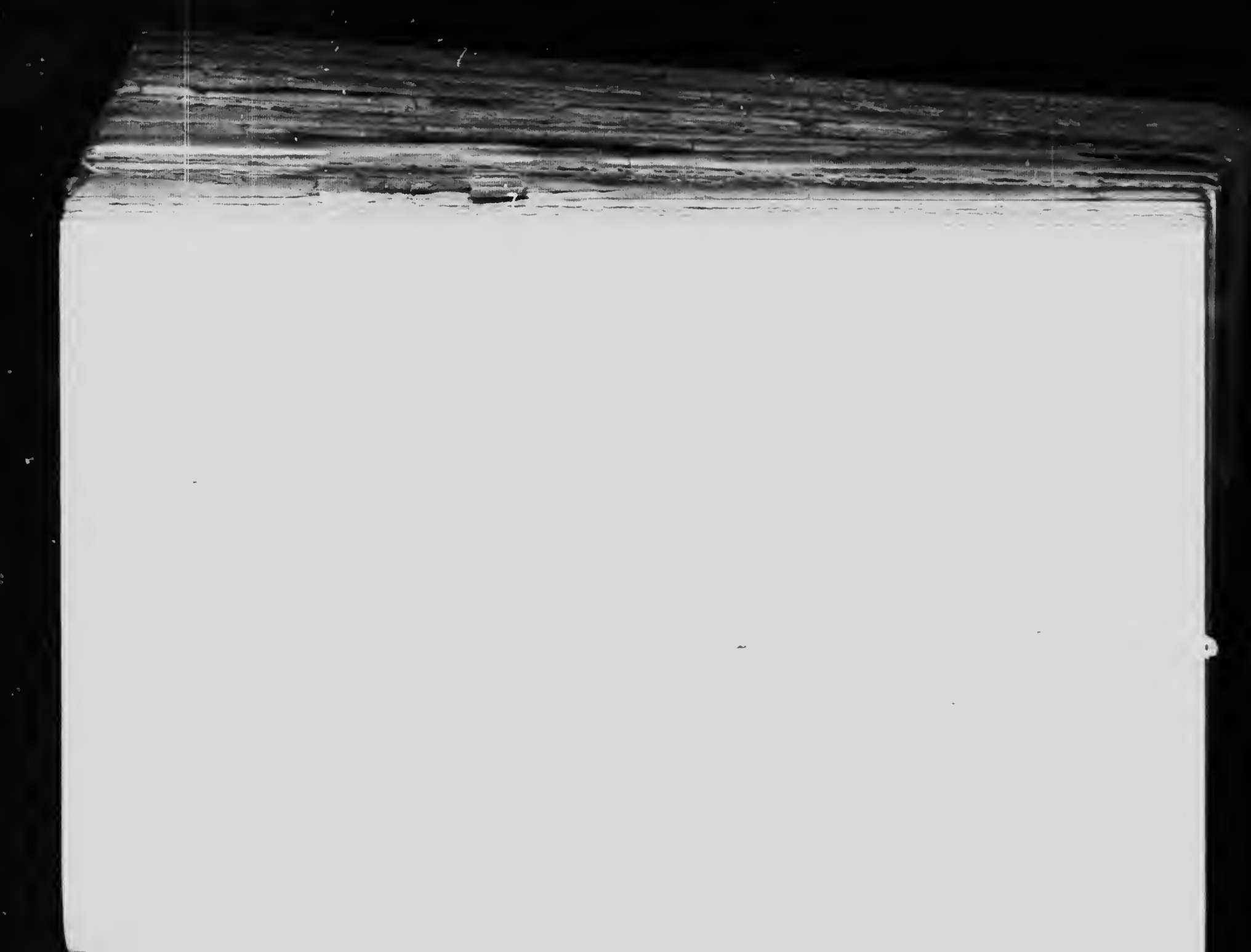
LOCH KEN

If it had not been my fate to be born upon Loch Grenoch, I would have desired to be born on Loch Ken-side—in some herd's house up towards the Tinkler's Loup, past Mossdale, and looking across to the Shirmers. Here, however, are the impressions of one actually born to this heritage of loch and moor and wide blowing air.

"So, during my father's absence, my brothers and I had the work of the farm to attend to. No dawn of day, sifting from the east through the greenery of the great soughing beeches and firs about the door, ever found any of the three of us in our beds. For me, as soon as it was light, I was up and away to the hills—where sometimes in the full lambing-time I would spend all night on the heathery fells or among the lirks and hidden dells of the mountain fastnesses.

KENMURE CASTLE

To face p. 214



"And oh, but it was pleasant work, and I liked it well! The breathing airs; the wide, starry arch I looked up into, when night had drawn her nightcap low down over the girdling blue-black hills; the moon glinting on the wrinkled breast of Loch Ken; the moor-birds, whaup and snipe, plover and wild duck, cheeping and chummering in their nests, while the wood-doves' moan rose plaintive from every copse and covert—it was a fit birthplace for a young lad's soul, though indeed at that time none was farther from guessing it than I. For as I went hither and thither, I pondered on nothing except the fine hunger the hills gave me, and the glorious draughts of whey and buttermilk my mother would serve out to me on my return, calling me meantime the greatest and silliest of her calves, as well as tweaking my ears at the milk-house door, if she could catch me ere I set my bare legs twinkling down the loaning." [1]

A Fit Birthplace.

But Loch Ken is more than a paradise for playing children. Yonder on its knoll is historic Kenmure Castle, where have dwelt many generations of the brave and the generous—bold barons, stout Lords of Lochinvar, indomitable Covenanters, sweet dames with souls that have "won far ben" in the mysteries of the faith. From that door Claverhouse rode forth on his quests. In that keep he held his garrison, with Colvin his right-hand man getting "His Honour" from all and sundry, while on a stone by the waterside Jean Gordon of Earlstoun sat writing her piteous epistle. Over the hills, to the east, "Kenmure is up and awa'" on that ill-fortuned riding of his which ended under the headsman's axe at Tower Hill.

It is a wondrous loch to watch, say from the bare side of Bennan on which the heather is conquering the space where I remember only the green waving of the fir, and the cushie-doos making moan under the dense branches.

Now for a moment Ken is clear and blue like an Italian sky. Anon all suddenly it ruffles its breast, as a dove's feathers are blown awry by a sudden gust of wind. It is full of broad, still

[1] "The Standard-Bearer," p. 2. (Methuen.)

stretches and unexpected inlets, sanded and pebbled. All this, too, though strictly speaking Loch Ken is no loch at all, but only the extension of a sluggard river, dreaming along between reedy solitudes and bays where the water-lilies grow in hundreds, white and yellow after their kind.

It was by the Loch of Ken that a certain pair of imagined lovers looked (for a time) their last into each other's eyes. I have been required by many correspondents to include the scene in "Raiderland." But I halt at the most interesting part in accordance with custom, so that those interested may go to them that sell and buy for themselves.

. . . . . .

"'There, that will keep you in mind of Galloway!' she said, thrusting a bunch of bog-myrtle into his breast pocket.

Lovers' Parting.

And indeed bog-myrtle is the characteristic smell of the great world of hill and moss we call by that name. In far lands the mere thought of it has brought tears to the eyes unaccustomed, so close do the scents and sights of the old Free Province—the lordship of the Pict—wind themselves about the hearts of its sons.

"Loch Ken lay like a dream in the clear dispersed light of the morning, the sun shimmering upon it as through translucent ground-glass. Teal and moor-hen squattered away from the shore as Winsome and Ralph climbed the brae, and stood looking northward over the superb levels of the loch. On the horizon Cairnsmuir showed golden tints through his steadfast blue.

"Whaups swirled and wailed about the rugged side of Bennan above their heads. Across the loch there was a solitary farm—beautifully set. Then beyond, the whole land leaped skyward in great heathery sweeps, save only here and there, where about some hill farm the little emerald crofts and blue-green springing oatlands clustered closest. The loch spread far to the north, sleeping in the sunshine. Burnished like a mirror it was, with no breath upon it. In the south, the Dee Water came down from the hills peaty and brown. The roaring of its rapids could faintly be heard. To the east,

across the loch, an island slept in the fairway, wooded to the water's edge.

THE STREET, NEW GALLOWAY

"It were a good place to look one's last on earth, this wooded promontory—which might indeed have been that

mountain, though a little one, from which was once seen all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. For there are no finer glories on the earth than red heather and blue loch, except only love and youth. And these four go well together.

"Yet here love and youth had come to part, between the heather that glowed on the Bennan Hill and the sapphire pavement of Loch Ken.

"For a long time Winsome and Ralph were silent—the empty interior sadness, mixed of great fear and great hunger, beginning to grip them as they stood. Lives only just twined and unified were again to twain. Love lately knit was to be torn asunder.

"'I must go,' said Ralph, looking down into his betrothed's face.

"'Stay only a little,' said Winsome. 'It is the last time.'

"So he stayed."[1]

. . . . . .

But they parted at last, and Ralph set out alone. In a little while he struck the beautiful road which runs north and south along the side of the Loch of Ken. Now there are fairer bowers in the south sun-lands. There are High-lands and Alp-lands there of sky-piercing beauty. But to Galloway, and specially to the central glens and flanking desolations thereof, one special beauty belongs. She is like a plain girl with beautiful eyes. There is no country like her in the world for colour—so delicately fresh is the rain-washed green of her pasture slopes, so keen the viridian of her turnip-fields when the dew is on the broad, fleshy, crushed leaves, so tender and deep the blue in the hollow places. It was small wonder that Ralph had set down in the note-book in which he sketched for future use all that passed under his eye:

"'Hast thou seen the glamour that follows
The falling of summer rain—
The mystical blues in the hollows,
The purples and greys on the plain?'

[1] "The Lilac Sunbonnet," p. 298. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

KENMURE CASTLE AND LOCH KEN

To face p. 218

"It is true that all these things were but the idle garniture of a tale that had lost its meaning to Ralph this morning; but yet in time the sense that the beauty and hope of life lay about him, stole soothingly in upon his soul. He was glad to breathe the gracious scent of spraying honeysuckle running its creamy riot of honey-drenched petals over the hedges, and flinging daring reconnaissance even to the tops of the dwarf birches by the wayside.

"So quickly Nature eased his smart, that—for such is the nature of the best men, even of the very best—at the moment when Winsome threw herself, dazed and blinded with pain, upon her low white bed in the little darkened chamber over the hill at Craig Ronald, Ralph was once more, even though with the gnaw of emptiness and loss in his heart, looking forward to the future, and planning what the day would bring to him upon which he should return."

. . . . . .

So at the request of many I have printed part of this simple scene. And I have this excuse, that there is not only scenery to be found in Galloway. There are men and women, hearts to be wounded and—Love wherewith to mend them.

Or so, at least, I have been informed.

CROCKETFORD VILLAGE

CHAPTER XXI

THE RAIDERS' BRIDGE

But I must not forget the Raiders' Bridge—the "Bridge of the Cattle," as I have heard it called. I have often been asked where it was, if it really existed, if the driving of the cattle happened thus and thus. Now, no criminal is bound to commit himself out of his own mouth, and I will only say that there can only be one true Raiders' Bridge—that across the Black Water a short half-mile south of the New Galloway Station—not, indeed, the modern bridge, but a much narrower one, the spring of whose arch can still be seen on both sides of the river, a few yards farther down. The road by which the cattle came, left the modern highway at Park Hill, and can still be followed quite easily over the Duchrae Moor—the tracing of it out making a very interesting variation to a trip upon the highway.

Of the scene itself I will say nothing, save that I take the liberty of introducing it, that the story may be read on the spot.

THE RAIDERS' BRIDGE, NEAR THE DUCHRAE

To face p. 220

"For a few minutes this picture stood like a painted show, with the Dee Water running dark and cool beneath—a kind of Circe's Inferno where beasts are tortured for ever.

"Two half-naked fiends ran alongside the column of cattle, carrying what was apparently a pot of blazing fire, which they threw in great ladlefuls on the backs of the packed beasts that stood frantically heaving their heads up to the sky. Then in a moment from all sides arose deafening yells. Fire lighted and ran along the hides of the rough red Highland and black Galloway cattle. Desperate men sprang on their backs, yelling. Dogs drove them forward. With one wild, irresistible, universal rush the maddened column of beasts drave at the bridge, and swept us aside like chaff.

The Fight on the Bridge.

"Never have I seen anything so passing strange and uncanny as this tide of wild things, frantic with pain and terror, whose billows surged irresistibly to the bridge-head. It was a dance of demons. Between me and the burning backs of the cattle there rose a gigantic Highlander with fiery eyes and matted front. On his back was a black devilkin that waved a torch with his hands, scattering contagious fire over the furious herd. The rush of the maddened beasts swept us off the bridge as chaff is driven before the wind. There was no question of standing. I shot off my pistols into the mass. I might as well have shot them into the Black Water. I declare some of the yelling devils were laughing as they rode, like fiends yammering and girning when hel' wins a soul. It is hard to make any one who did not see it, believe in what we saw that night. Indeed, in this warm and heartsome winter room, with the storm without, and the wife in bed crying at me to put by the writing and let her get to sleep, it is well-nigh impossible to believe that any of these things came to pass within the space of a few years. Yet so it was. I who write it down was there. These eyes saw the tossing, fiery waves of maddened creatures that ran forward seeking death to escape from torture, while the reek of their burning went up to heaven.

"I looked again. Beneath at the ford I saw a thousand wild cattle with their thick hair blazing with fire, their tails in the air, tossing wide-arched horns. I saw the steam of their nostrils going up like smoke as they surged through the water, a hundred mad Faas and Marshalls on their backs yelling like fiends of the pit. In a score of pulse-beats there was not a beast that had not forced the bridge or crossed the ford. We who defended were broken and scattered; some of us swept down by the water, powder damp, guns trampled shapeless—dispirited, annihilated, we that had been so sure of victory."

CARSPHAIRN

CHAPTER XXII

THE GLENKENS

AND now we come to the heart of the matter. Every traveller's road in Galloway leads him at long and last to the Glenkens —and yet they want a railway, and set poets to ask for it!

But we who are of the older day prefer to think of the Glenkens as it was in the year of Bothwell Brig, when a certain William Gordon, of Earlstoun, rode away through these sweet holms and winding paths south toward the Duchrae. Nowhere, to my thinking, is the world so gracious as between the green woodlands of Earlstoun and the grey Duchrae Craigs. For (writes the hero) "the pools of the Water of Ken slept, now black, now silver, beneath us. They were deep set about with the feathers of the birches, and had the green firs standing bravely like men-at-arms on every rocky knoll. Then the strath opened out, and we saw Ken flow silver-clear between the greenest and floweriest banks in the world. The Black Craig of Dee loomed on our right side as we rode, sulky after the burning of last year's heather. And the great Kells range sank slowly behind us, ridge behind ridge of hills whose very names make a

Stormy Music.

storm of music—Millyea, Milldown, Millfire, Corscrine, and the haunted fastnesses of the Meaull of Garryhorn in the head end of Carsphairn. The reapers were out in the high fields about Gordonston by daybreak, with their crooked reaping-hooks in their hands, busily grasping the handfuls of grain and cutting them through with a pleasant 'risp' of sound. Cocks crowed early that morning, for they knew it was going to be a day of fervent heat. It would be as well, therefore, to have the pursuit of slippery worm and rampant caterpillar over betimes in the dawning. Then each chanticleer could stand in the shade and scratch himself applausively with alternate foot all the hot noontide, while the wives clucked and nestled in the dusty holes along the banks, interchanging intimate reflections upon the moral character of the giddier and more skittish young pullets of the farmyard."

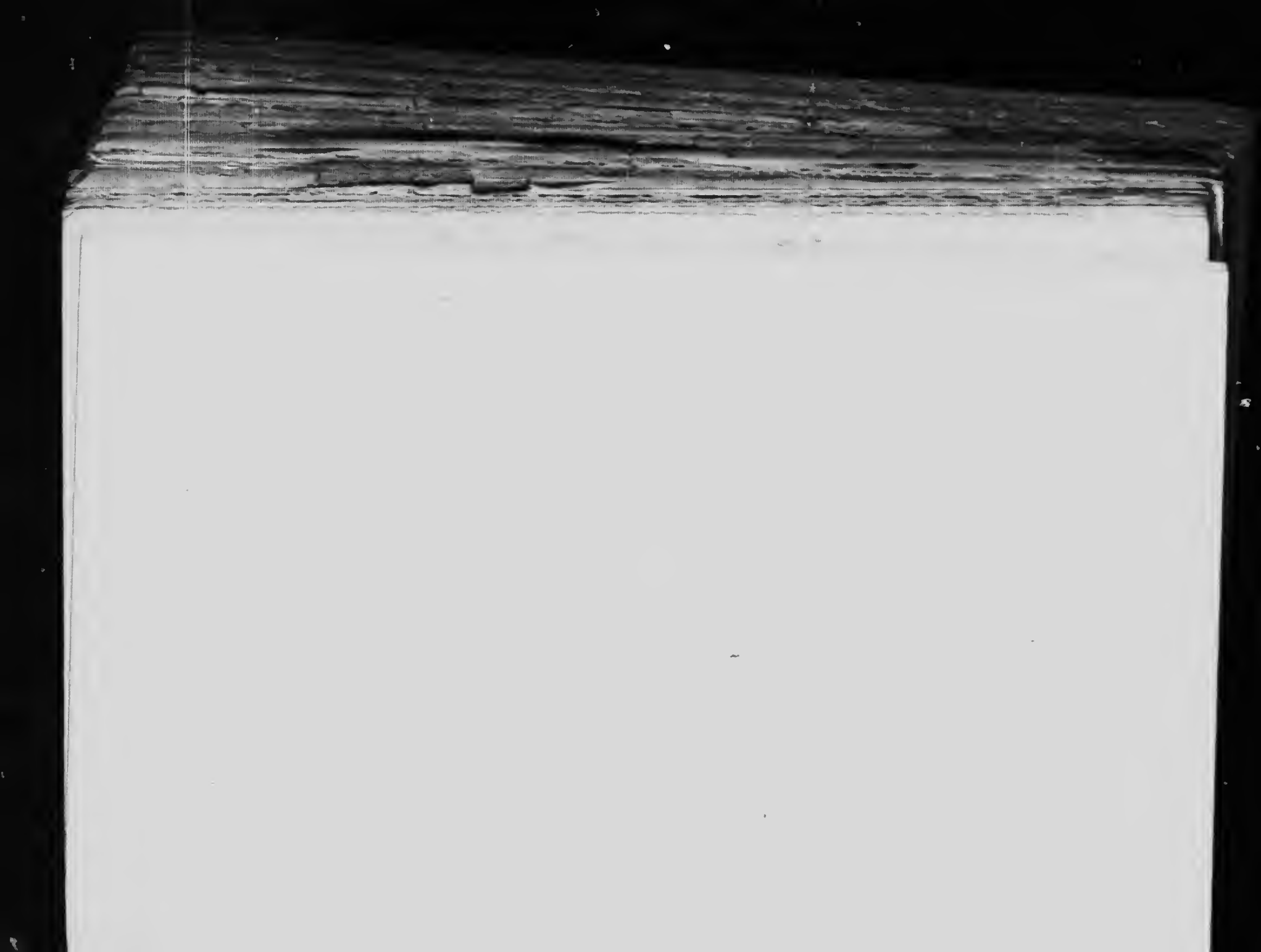
Furthermore, I have another reason for remembering the Glenkens. It was a favourite cycling route of Sweetheart's and mine—in the good years when cats were kittens, and dogs were puppies, and sheep were lambs, and Sweethearts had not yet grown up!

"We skimmed under the imminent side of the Bennan Hill, now purple and golden-brown with the heather and the dying bracken. On our right, by the lochside of Ken, we passed the little cottage which thirty years ago was known to all in the neighbourhood as Snuffy Point, from an occupant who was said to use so much snuff that the lake was coloured for half a mile round of a deep brown tint whenever he sneezed. A little farther on is a deep tunnel of green leaves, down which we looked. It leads to Kenmure Castle. Sweetheart and I always stop just here to dream. It seems as if we could stretch our arms and float down into the wavering infinitude of stirring leaves.

"In another minute we had come to the summit of the hill, and were sliding smoothly down the long, cleanly-kept street of New Galloway. Not a cur barked in our track—a fact so very remarkable that Sweetheart asked why.

DAIRY—THE VILLAGE STREET

To face p. 224



"'Because New Galloway is a royal burgh,' I said for a complete answer.

"We passed the entrance to that fascinating Clatteringshaws road, which leads through the wildest scenery that can be reached by wheels in the south of Scotland. Soon we were steering northward along the green holms of the Ken, and, as we looked to the west, the sun was beginning to sit low on the horizon."[1]

One may spend, as I have done, many hospitable months in Dalry, housed somewhere in the bright smiling village clambering up its long slope, or, better still, provided for in the comfortable Lochinvar Hotel. It is a fine centre for excursions—yet better as a starting-place for the hill-climber, the botanist, the photographer. There is interest on every side—the strange, sweet solitudes of the Garpel and Jean's Waa's; the wide moorland expanse of Lochinvar Loch, Knockman lying far up, lost among the hills—and, best of all, the old Castle of Earlstoun, the home of Sir Alexander Gordon, the famous "Bull of Earlstoun," of his scarcely less famous wife, with her "Contendings" and "Witnessings," and the house, too, from which came forth Mary, the wife of John MacMillan, "the Cameronian Apostle," and the first minister of the United Societies.[2]

There is a beautiful walk from Allangibbon Bridge to the ruins of Earlstoun, along the waterside, which is quite as lovely to-day as when John MacMillan traversed it on his way to cast out the devils that had taken possession of the breast of Alexander Gordon.

"I passed," he says, "by the little clachan of St. John's Town of Dalry, leaving it stretching away up the brae-face on my right hand. A little way beyond the kirk I struck into

[1] "Sweetheart Travellers," p. 226. (Wells Gardner, Darton, & Co.)

[2] It is necessary to apply to the proprietor of Earlstoun, Mr. Forbes of Callendar, for permission to visit the historic site. Mr. Forbes grants such orders readily and courteously, but during his absence it is well not to go to the castle ruins unprovided with his pass, as a protection against the ignorance or insolence of temporary subordinates.

the fringing woods of Earlstoun, which like an army of tra
bands in Lincoln green, beset the grey tower.

"I was on the sheltered walk along which I had or
before come with *her*. The water alternately gloomed a
sparkled beneath. The fish sulked and wav
lazy tails, anchored in the water-swirls below t
falls, their heads steady to the stream as the need
to the pole.

The Clachan of Dalry.

"The green of summer was yet untouched by autumn fros
save for a russet hair or two on the outmost plumes of t
birks that wept above the stream."[1]

The dismantling of Earlstoun is of quite recent date, ar
the cornices and ornaments were still fairly complete abo
1867, when I first visited it. I remember there was water
the well at the time—the Well by the Gate, from which your
William Gordon desired so much to drink, lying and lookin
across at the home of his youth, presently a garrison of th
oppressor of the Brethren.

"But more and more the desire for the sweet well water o
the gateway tower came to me as I lay parched with thirst
and more than the former yearning for home things. I
seemed that no wine of sunny France, no golden juice o
Xeres, could ever be one-half so sweet as the water of tha
Earlstoun well—'that is beside the gate.'

"I remember saying over and over to myself these words
which I had often heard my father read as he took the Book
'O that one would give me to drink of the water of the Well
of Bethlehem that is beside the Gate.' So I rose out of the
lair where I was, took off my shoes and stockings, and went
down to the riverside. Ken Water is very low at that season,
and, looking over, I could see the fish lying in the black pools
with their noses up stream, waiting for a spate to run into the
shallows of the burns. I declare that, had my mind not been
set on the well-house, I should have stripped there and then
for a plunge after them. But in a trice I had crossed the
river, wading to my middle in the clear, warm pool. I think

[1] "The Standard-Bearer," p. 287. (Methuen.)

it was surely the only time that man ever waded Ken to get a drink of water."[1]

"The House of Earlstoun sits bonny above its river side, and there are few fairer waters in this land than the Ken Water. Also, it looks its bonniest in the early morning when the dew is on all sides, and a stillness like the peace of God lies on the place. I do not expect the Kingdom of Heaven very much to surpass Earlstoun on a Sabbath morning in June, when the bees are in the roses. And, indeed, I shall be well content with that."

But it was little of that peace which the Gordons knew during the times of the Covenant. Calm and dignified William Gordon, the elder, was slain on the eve of Bothwell Brig, though he had not taken any part in the conflict.

Alexander and his younger brother were haled from prison to prison. Jean Hamilton, Alexander's wife, was called upon to suffer for the faith that was in her, as we shall see hereafter.

But the popular mind dwells longest upon Sandy—as it does about the memory of all those physically strong, violent men who are yet, like Samson, full of human weaknesses.

Most famous of all Sandy's feats was his clearing of the King's Privy Council for Scotland when the fit of anger took him. It was appointed that he should be tortured, as was then the way with those who refused to answer, and, as would be said of an elephant, he went suddenly *must*.

Sandy and the Privy Council.

Then the black wrath of his long imprisonment suddenly boiling over, Sandy took hold on the great iron bar before him and bent his strength to it—which, when he was roused, was like the strength of Samson. With one rive he tore it from its fastenings, roaring all the while with that terrible voice of his, which used to set the cattle wild with fear when they heard it, and which even affrighted men grown and bearded. "The two men in masks sprang upon him, but he seized them one in each hand and cuffed and buffeted them against the wall, till I thought he had splattered their brains on the stones. Indeed, I looked

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 204. (Isbister & Co.)

to see. But though there was blood enough, there were brains to speak of.

"Then very hastily some of the Council rose to their f to call the guard, but the door had been locked during t meeting, and none for a moment could open it. It was fe some to see Sandy. His form seemed to tower to the ceili A yellow foam, like spume of the sea, dropped from his li He roared at the Council with open mouth, and twirled t bar over his head. With one leap he sprang over the barri and at this all the councillors drew their cloaks about the and rushed pell-mell for the door, with Sandy thundering at th heels with his iron bar. It was all wonderfully fine to wat For Sandy, with more sense than might have been expect of him, being so raised, lundered them about the broadest their cloaks with the bar, till the building was filled with t cries of the mighty Privy Council of Scotland. I declare laughed heartily, though under sentence of death, and f that, well as I thought I had borne myself, Sandy the B had done a thousand times better.

"Then from several doors the soldiery came rushing in, a in short space Sandy, after levelling a good file with his ga of iron, was overpowered by numbers. Nevertheless, he co tinued to struggle till they twined him helpless in coils of rop In spite of all, it furnished work for the best part of a co pany to take him to the Castle, whither, 'for a change of ai and to relieve his madness, he was remanded, by order of t Council when next they met. But there was no more hea of examining Sandy by torture.

"And it was a tale in the city for many a day how San Gordon cleared the chamber of the Privy Council."[1]

At this time it was that Alexander Gordon's wife w turned out of house and home, and I have thought it wor while to reprint a letter telling of her expulsion and h troubles, as well as a more extended narrative of her hu band's adventures. The one is genuinely hers, copied wo for word, the other true in substance and fact, but written

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 376. (Isbister & Co.)

AT DALRY

To face p. 228

imitation of Jean Hamilton's style. It will not require any great critical skill to distinguish the real from the imitation.

"DEAR MISTRESS" (so it runs),—"your letter did yield great satisfaction to me, and now I have good words to tell you. The Lord is doing great things for me. Colvin and Clavers (Cornel) have put us out of all that we have, so that we know not where to go.

"I am for the present in a cot-house. Oh, blessed cottage! As soon as my enemies began to roar against me, so quickly came my kind Lord to me and did take my part. He made even mine enemies to favour me, and He gave me kindly welcome to this cottage.

"Well may I say that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

"Dear Mistress Jean, praise God on my behalf, and cause all that love Him to praise Him on my behalf. I fear that I miscarry under His kind hand.

"Colvin is reigning here like a prince, getting 'His Honour' at every word. But he hath not been rude to me. He gave me leave to take out all that I had. What matters suffering after all! But, oh! the sad fallings-away of some! I cannot give a full account of them.

"*I have nothing to write on but a stone by the waterside, and know not how soon the enemy may be upon me.* I entreat you to send me your advice what to do. The enemy said to me that I should not get to stay in Galloway gif I went not to their kirk.

"They said I should not even stay in Scotland, for they would pursue me to the far end of it, but I should be forced to go to their church. The persecution is great. There are many families that are going to leave their houses and go out of the land. Gif you have not sent my former letter let it not now go, but send this as quickly as you can. I fear our friends will be much concerned. I have written that Alexander may not venture to come home. I entreat that you will write that to him and close mine within yours. I have

not backed his. Send me all your news. Remember me
all friends. I desire to be reminded to them.

"I rest, in haste, your loving friend and servant,

"JEAN HAMILTON."

Now, I declare that this letter made me think better th
ever before of Sandy's wife, for I am not gifted with appr
priate and religious reflections in the writing of letters myse
But very greatly do I admire the accomplishment. Je
Hamilton was in time of peace greatly closed up within he
self; but in the time of extrusion and suffering her narro
heart expanded. Notwithstanding the strange writing-desk
stone by the waterside, the letter is well written, but the gre
number of words which had been blurred and corrected as
their spelling, reveal the turmoil and anxiety of the writer.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER GORDON

FOOLISHLY CALLED "THE BULL OF EARLSTOUN"

Written down by his wife in the Lord—JEAN HAMILTON.

THIS chronicle records the sad Defection of Janet Hamilton, Spouse to Alexander Gordon of Earlstoun—how she lied to save her husband, and so lost the Favour of God and the Approval of her Conscience—together with her Husband's many Distressful Adventures during the years of the Killing Time—all newly and faithfully expressed and copied from the Testimonies and Covenant Engagements of the aforesaid Janet Hamilton (or Gordon) but with the religious and moral reflections thereupon carefully left out.

Ever since Sandy, and I his unworthy spouse, wan clear out of the weary Castle of Blackness, it has been my intent to set down in writing the tale of my great temptations and grievous fall. First I had written it with many cryings out and testifyings; but Sandy, with that worldly wisdom which keeps him from being (as the good Master Vernor of Irongray used to say) "ane earthen vessel thoroughly sanctified"—has adjured me to leave out both appeals to Providence and animadversions on the evil spirit of the times. But how am I to avoid these, seeing that never since the flood was there a time so fruitful in defections—alas, poor Scotland!

Well, in obedience to my goodman Sandy, I will even leave out much matter exceedingly profitable.

The tale itself runs thus:—

As all know, the worst time of the fury of the Persecu
was during the drear summer and hairst of the year 1
Then were the beasts of prey fully unchained, and
ravined along every green strath and thrust shining steel
tween every blade of heather on all the moors of the South
West, thirsting for the blood of the poor lads of the Coven
O these dear Wanderers—they well-nigh broke my h
when they used to come and stand by the back window
the Earlstoun, with their white haggard faces and rag
clothes, and what touched me more than all, the little lu
in the neuk of their plaids where they carried their Bibles.

But that was in the days when the fury of them t
hated us was still mercifully restrained. For the time ca
and that speedily, when my own man, Sandy Gordon, the pr
of the countryside for strength and beauty—God forgive m
I had meant to say for a godly walk and conversation
became a wanderer like the rest, with a price on his he
and a stomach empty of meat, save as it might be the r
haws on the hedges, and the water from the burns that tink
and whisper among the heather on the hillside. But thou
life and lands are precious, what are they to principle? A
the best and bravest croft in all the Earlstoun is not worth th
value of one untrue or intemperate word.

But alas! the sad shifts and stratagems which even th
godly have ofttimes stooped to in those days—even lyin
to the men of sin that came to hunt them at the instance
the King, and urging the deceit of David when he was wit
the King of the Philistines and feigned himself mad. David
indeed!—as well might they have pled the practice of th
Psalmist in the matter of Bathsheba!

Nevertheless I have no liberty in testifying against such
practices. For I, even I, Janet Hamilton, sister to that mos
clear-shining light Sir Robert of that name, have stooped to
deceit. And of this I will even now tell the tale.

Yet I will speak of the lying and deceit of others first
and the other so-called necessities of this sad time—then o

mine own. The shame and defection began with Sandy's own lack of courage to declare himself after the sad day at Bothwell. Ah, if my man had been as my brother on that day, he would have taken up his testimony against the defections, even to the dividing of the brethren and the losing of the battle. But Sandy has ever stood for the course that would work out best according to worldly prudence, thinking in his unhallowed conceit that, if the worst came to the worst, he could ever drive through by the weight of his own great body and sturdy sword-arm. For there is even yet, after he has been ten years married to me, and hath begot of covenanted children four or it may be five, something of the man of wrath about Alexander Gordon. And for this do I daily lament.

I had in this place much more written, but in came Sandy and took the papers away with him, saying rudely that it would fit me better to look to my bairns' cleading—for that little Will had never a decent pair of breeks to his back, nor yet a well-sewn point to hold them up with. But alas! there again spake the carnal man—for what are bairns' clothes to the concerns of the never-dying soul?

But I had begun to tell of Bothwell when, as I have said, Sandy came and interrupted my reflections with his unsanctified haste and turmoil.

Well, as I said, my man was ill-beset and like to be slain as he rode through the town of Hamilton on his way home from the battle. For he was wounded, though but slightly, and his beast could carry him no further. Likewise the town was in the hands of one Sergeant John Crichton, a rude and malignant persecutor. So that there was little for Sandy Gordon to do, but like his own brave father to cry, "Have at ye—defend yourselves in the name of the God of Battles!" And so to drive into the thickest of them till he died. And I sometimes think it had been better for Sandy, when I see him going to and fro on county business with Rob Grier and Lidderdale of the Isle (men up to their necks in the blood of the Saints) had he died thus at the charge with

William Gordon that day on the road to Bothwell. But his father's death knew he nothing as he rode into the to of Hamilton. For he had been with my brother Sir Rob upon the bridge-head till the last poor remnant of our f broke before the cannon-shots.

So as he came hanging his head nearly to his saddle-b and his horse limping weary-foot down the street, who shou look out of a door but John Scarlett, who had been retain and master-at-arms to our cousin (according to the flesh) W Gordon of Lochinvar—one like his master, a man who without godliness, who from his youth up had compan with blasphemers and ill-doers of all kinds.

"Hallo, Master Alec," cried John Scarlett to my husban using very great familiarity considering his condition, "whith away? From the field where thy folk lie dead and dying, s ye?—why, man, so will you also lie streekit and cold, unle there be some remedy. Black Crichton is here in Hamilto and with him a full troop of dragoons searching every ho and corner. Hear ye not the clamour of them?"

"I will turn and go back!" answered my husband, wearil tugging at his horse's head.

But it was not to be, for even as his limping steed wen about, Sandy saw the gate through which he had come in th hand of the enemy, and he knew that he was taken, even a a rat is in a trap.

Then John Scarlett hurried him into his house, where he was lodging with a buxom widow—and as I think in far too great favour with her for an honest hostess and her soldier-lodger.[1]

"Wife," cried Scarlett, "the boiling water, quick!"

So the goodwife brought him some scalding hot in an iron pingle, and with that Scarlett out with his razors, being skilful at the trade of surgeon-barber, and then and there cleanses Sandy of every hair on his face, while the dragoons were thundering on the doors of the houses at the head of the street.

[1] Note added by Alexander Gordon—"God keep me from the charity of ane very good woman in a matter of her own sex!"

"Is one Alexander Gordon anyways within—a traitor with a great red beard?" he heard them crying up and down the closes.

And Jack Scarlett laughed in his rude profane way as he swept up the beard and threw the sweepings into the fire.

"Well would it be for you, Sandy Gordon," quoth he, "if I could burn up your whiggish opinions as easily as I can your red beard."

Hardly had the hostess wrapped Sandy in a plaid and drugget skirt of her own, and set a white mutch upon his head, when there came a banging of muskets upon the outer door.

"Keep your gown low about your feet," the woman whispered to Sandy, "they might see your horseman's boots —and such-like look ill-becoming on a young lass."

Then aloud she cried, with her unsanctified woman's guile, "Come away, worthy gentlemen, here is none but my man, Trooper Scarlett and my sister Susan, in from the country with eggs and butter to the Hamilton market."

The soldiers clattered in, all of them crowding about the house-place and helping themselves to whatever they desired in the way of food and drink as was their use and wont. Then they began to ask questions. First of all of Scarlett, as of a comrade home on furlough, and then hearing that no rebel had been seen in Hamilton, some of the younger of them fell a-daffing and fumbling with the women. And I dare say the buxom goodwife was nothing loath. But a soldier knave chanced to set his arm about Sandy's waist, for at that time he was well-faured, white and ruddy of complexion like young David, crying, "Here is an armful of girth for an elbow to clip!" Whereat Sandy let out his arm and dealt him a buffet with his palm on the ear that stretched him on the floor amid shouts of laughter from his comrades.

"Well dealt, wench!" said the sergeant, "faith, but you are a brave one—a sturdy hizzie. I declare I would I had thee in my troop. I had e'en made thee corporal. For that arm of thine would keep these unruly lads in order."

The rascal who had received the stroke staggered to his feet and looked about him high and low, holding the side of his head on his finger-tips.

"What was it that fell on me?" he said. For doubtless his brain was spinning, Sandy's hand being no soft bairn's palm.

"It was but a lass that caressed thee of her kindness, Davie Stenhouse," said Sergeant John Crichton, for it was he; "wilt thou try thy luck a second time with the maid? What, man? A soldier should never take a woman's 'No,' even after seven times seven—much less at the first refusal."

"I want no more—neither 'Yea' nor 'Nay' from that wench!" growled the man who had been called David Stenhouse, making for the door.

And so, laughing and joking at their comrade's discomfiture, the soldiers crowded out, and as the sergeant went last he set his hand on Sandy's shoulder and said, "Bonny lass, thou art fit to be a soldier's wife, but thou art meat for better than Davie Stenhouse. By the mass, keep thyself to thyself till the wars be over, and God's truth, I will e'en marry thee out of hand myself!"

And Sandy (so they tell) looked up at him with eyes like the eyes of a calf, and he on his part looked at Sandy like a sheep—till my man says that he feared that he was about to kiss him, when he would have had to brain the fellow. However that may be, it was well that at that moment a crying and a noise arose on the street, and a shouting was heard, "Here is Gordon—here is the rebel!" So that Sergeant John had to hasten down the outer stair. And after that they kenned no more of him or of his troopers, though the noise of firing was to be heard at intervals all through the night.

Now this story of itself might be interesting enough to the carnally minded, and to such as sit about fire-ingles in the gloaming and tell unspiritual tales. But I would not have condescended upon it, had it not been that I have it laid upon me to make certain observes and pious reflections upon these occurrents for the edification of the little separated flock, and also for the convoying of grace down to posterity.

First then of the deceitfulness of lying women—such as the goodwife of Hamilton, with whom John Scarlett dwelt (it is suspected) in no honest way.

THE GREY MARE'S TAIL

Alas! alas! these so pregnant and edifying observes are all lost. For after his looking of the sheep upon the hill, in comes Sandy, and, casting his eyes over that which I had writ, he tears out these ensuing eleven pages, with words that very ill became a Christian—all about charity and thinking well of one's neighbour even if she be a woman! And so he burns the writing I had such pains with before my eyes. "The woman saved my life!" said he.

As if that had aught to do with the matter, or vitiated in the least the pertinence of these most solemn warnings and denunciations—now, alas, destroyed and lost to the world!

But as I have said, Sandy is very far from being thoroughly sanctified. Charity, i' faith—and to a woman! An I liked I could tell this about women which would make your blood run cold—women, too, well thought of and making a brave show to the world. Ah, well, but to my tale.

Then after that came my man home. And the period of mine own trial was at hand. For with the death of his father under arms, and his own presence and deeds of arms at Bothwell (which were well known to the authorities), the persecutors came often to our house at times unexpected, and turned everything aloft and alow with their sword-points and musket-butts, seeking, as they said, for Sandy and the other traitor. And all the while Sandy himself was hid in a recess above the kitchen—a space in which he could scarcely turn, breathing through a crevice in the wall, and listening to the oaths of the soldiers seeking eagerly for his life, talking all the while of the blood-money which his head would bring at Dumfries, where was quartered John Graham of Claverhouse.

And I myself—poor Janet Hamilton, his unworthy spouse, what did I? When they asked me, first of all I declared that I would not answer, but when they threatened to put a lighted match between my fingers and burn them to the bone as was their custom, and to hang up William, my sweet little lad, by the thumbs, and beat him with many stripes—I dropped on my knees and swore with solemn oaths on my soul's salvation that I had not seen hilt nor hair of Sandy Gordon since he rode away a week before the fatal day of Bothwell.

For the which lie and apostacy, the Lord, if He be a just God, will not forgive me. I perjured my soul to save my man. Yet if so be that He forgive the perjurer and forswearer in That Day, I may indeed be grateful for His mercy—but I shall certainly think less of Him as the God of Justice.

And it was as much that I could not abide the strain to my conscience in lying to the persecutors (though I continued

to do so, when it was necessary), as because of the danger that some questioning spy might discover his lurking place, that Sandy made himself, with the help of his brother William, a shelter in a great bushy oak in the midst of the home park wood.

Then after the enemy had put a stated garrison in the Earlstoun, and a clanjamphrey of wild dragoons went out each morning to hunt the poor wanderers, and returned each night with their quarry—or with oaths and cursings at their ill success, Sandy abode up there alone in the tree top. William and he had constructed a platform on which my distressed goodman could stretch himself at full length and yet be entirely hidden from observation, even should a soldier pass directly underneath. The oak tree, which is great and very umbrageous, stands in the thickest part of the woodland, and the platform or bed had a shelter over it sufficient to turn any ordinary rain.

So when the soldiers of the garrison which harassed us, were away on some of their quests—and they oftenest rode out at nights or in the early morning, thinking so to catch the fugitives—Sandy would steal in for an hour by his own fireside, or perchance to lay his hand on the row of little flaxen heads safely asleep in their little trundle beds, and all breathing lightly like the airs that bring the clover scents through the open windows at midsummer.

Then I, that ought to have been strong for the Cause and rejoiced in these sufferings for the Covenants' sake, would throw myself on my husband's neck and weep like a bairn. Yes, to my shame I own it! I was no better than a lassie that has lost her lover. For even I, Janet Hamilton, the sister of him who stood dividing right from wrong on the day of Bothwell (by which, they say, the battle was lost), cried and fleeched on Sandy Gordon not to go away and leave me and the young bairns again—knowing well that he was bound to go and that speedily. But I declare that I would have risked prison and death, that but for one night I might wake and reach out my hand and ken my man beside me in the darkness.

So greatly will mere human love shame a woman and humble her pride. I, that thought I could be a Jael, to become a mere Ruth, ready to couch at the feet of Boaz and content to warm his feet in her bosom! On this too I would have certain humiliatory observes and confessions to make, but that even now I see my husband coming home from the hill, and I wot well that he would bid me leave the minister's trade to ministers bred and ordained, and devote me to looking after my spinning maidens in the kitchen.

Well, at the time I tell of, among these maidens there was one, Jess Gowans by name, a comely lass enough, but one with a tongue exceedingly unruly, ever going *clip-clip* about the doors with the lads, and heard above all others in the byre and at the winning of the hay. Aye, and a wench mightily forward in her ways too, so that I have more than once had to check her for throwing herself in my great silly Sandy's way—who (to his shame as an elder be it spoken) upon occasion would not disdain to stand and talk with Jess about other subjects, I opine, than the text at the last field-preaching in the Linn of Garple.

But though I have ever held Jess Gowans to be a light-headed and flighty quean, yet I must set it on record here that it was her woman's quickness which saved my husband's life. And that, little as I like the lass, I would be the last to deny. It was at the back of six of the clock and the goodman was sitting quiet by the window talking to me, a bairn clambering on each knee, when a herd lad came running white-faced from the field to tell us that the house was closely invested, and that Cornet Graham, the new officer of the garrison at Kenmure, had watchers posted at all the doors, and a cordon drawn to catch my husband as he came forth—all for the price that the government had put on his head in the matter of the Rye House Plot—with which, God be my Judge, he had as little to do as the babe that can but smile at the bright light of a candle.

Sandy started to his feet in a moment, and drew his broad-sword, which there was not a man in all Galloway could wield

save himself. But to my man it was no more than a brittle stick of sourock grass that a lad carries between his finger and thumb on Sabbath afternoons when he goes up Garple side to court his joe.

And I own that I loved to see him so manly and tall, though I know that there is no pleasure, rightly considered, in the bodily beauty of any man. Yet for my life I could not help the pride of the eye, even at that moment. So there for a space Sandy stood with his sword held fiercely, ready to run the first through that should come at him.

But it was Jess Gowans that found the way out, and for the quickness of her wit she shall have a christening kirtle and a short gown for each of her bairns—aye, even if she have four and twenty—which may well enough be, for six in four years is far from canny!

"Haste ye, master," she cried; "doff that long-tailed coat, and on wi' Jock Webster's auld leather jacket and his working brogues all overclarted with byre-stuff."

So in a trice she had him out at the back door of the yard, with a weather-worn bonnet without a tassel on his head, drawn low upon his brows. She thrust an axe into his hand and set him at the hag-clog to cut firewood, heaping faggots and uncut pieces about him. And hardly was Sandy drawing his first stroke when the noise of the soldiery was heard at the gate. They came bustling within the courtyard, and their leader made straight for the wrangling pair in the middle of the courtyard.

"I tell ye what, silly Jock," Jess was crying shrilly, "if ye canna split the kindling wood better than that, and be sharper aboot it too, I'll draw a stick stiffly across your lazy back."

And Sandy, pretending to be stupid like one that hath the sullens, only mumbled and shrugged his shoulders. Which so provoked the lass, that what did the impudent besom do but take up the shank of the yard-broom and lay it soundly across her master's shoulders—all the time crying out upon the stupidity of men.

The captain of the soldiers, a man of some humour stayed his men with a movement of his hand that he might observe the scene, and when Jess had given Sandy a good warm jacket she paused and looked about her. Then suddenly becoming conscious of the presence of observers, as it seemed, she dropped the broomstick and screamed.

"O kind sirs," she cried, "dinna shoot me—I was only correctin' this silly Jock for no cuttin' the firewood cleverly eneuch. The like o' him wad try the patience o' Job!"

The soldiers laughed, like the jolly sons of Belial that many of them are.

"Well done, lass—you were in the right to keep yon lout in subjection. He seems a sorry knave and you drew many a good stroke across his lazy back. E'en warm his jacket at your pleasure. But we come here to look once more for your master, lass—hast seen him?"

"Nay," said Jess, "he does not often come this way. I think he is over the moors looking the sheep between Knockman and Lochinvar."

"Like enough!" said the captain, "and a clever wench he has for a maid. We want some one to point out the various rooms of the house, and the lofts of the out-buildings. We are well advised that your master is within, and we have sentinels all round, so that he cannot escape from our hands this time."

"I will come and show you all the hiding-places!" cried Jess eagerly—so eagerly that I trembled, for the reprobate deceiver seemed in earnest.

"No, no, my pretty," the soldier returned her answer, smiling, "I thank you, but I think not. You are somewhat too clever, my lass, and had better just bide here where you are. We will take this country Jock. Hey!" he cried, turning to Sandy, who had gone on sturdily splitting the kindling roots, "drop that axe and come show us the rooms of the castle, and miss not a nook or corner on your life. Sergeant, set your pistol to his head, and if he flinch or hesitate, let him

have the full dose. It will sting him worse than this good wench's besom across his back."

At this Sandy promptly dropped the cleaver and marched solemnly indoors with a hulking unconcern, as if the hunting of Whigs were all the same to him as chopping firewood, both being equally in the day's work. The soldiers followed him from garret to cellar, while Sandy stolidly pointed out each place and gave the name of it with sulky acquiescence.

"Kitchen!" he would say stupidly as he came to the door where Jess was now clattering among the dishes.

The soldiers laughed, as at another time I might have done myself.

"We can see as much for ourselves, man!" said their commander, somewhat testily.

"Larder!" announced Sandy with unconcern, opening another door in which a sheep was hanging.

"In the King's name, make that at least a prisoner of war!" cried the captain, touching the swinging meat with his sword.

And it was the same as he took them round the outbuildings.

"Cart-shed—pig-stye—midden!" he mandated as the captain put a daintily-scented handkerchief to his nostrils; "would it please you, sir, to crawl in and see that my master is not hiding there?"

When the search was ended, the officer looked a little blank. "He seems to have escaped us again," he said; "yet the spy Mardrochat swore that we had nipped him cleanly this time."

Then he turned sharply to Sandy.

"Rascal!" he said sternly, with his hand on his ragged collar, "do you know anything of your master's hiding-place in the woods? Tell us, or we may take another way with you!"

Sandy lifted an eye to the questioner, as stupid as that of an ox over a dyke, and slowly shook his head.

"My master," quoth he, "has no hiding-place that I know of. I ken well he can always find me when he wants to set me a piece of work—and that is often enough. And I am sure if he thought you kind gentlemen wanted to speak with him, he would immediately show himself to you. For such is ever his way."

The soldiers laughed again, and the officer clapped Sandy on the back as he marched his men away.

"You are a kindly enough nowt, man," he said; "take care you come to no harm in such a rebel service. Better enlist in his Majesty's dragoons, where they might make something of you, and where at any rate the drill-sergeant would straighten those bent shoulders of yours."

"I wad rather hae Jess Gowans' besom across them than the drum-major's cat-o'-nine-tails!" said Sandy, looking up cunningly.

"There I grant you show your good taste," smiled the officer, "for your Jess is both a blythe and a heartsome lass!"

For in some things men are all alike.

Then when all was clear, I would somewhat have reprimanded Jess for her freedoms with her master. But the daft quean had the assurance to tell me, her mistress, that unbonny as the master looked with Jock Webster's leathern jerkin on him and the besom shank across his back, he would have looked infinitely worse lying at the dykeback with his brains scattered here and there, like a bowl of porridge spilt on the grass.

And when I would have answered the forward minx as she deserved, Sandy cried, "Goodwife, haud your tongue, for let me tell ye that ye owe your man and the bairns their father to that lass's ready wit!"

And indeed so true it was, that I thanked Jess that very day with kind words when we were by ourselves in the byre. I only did not wish to cocker her up with conceit in the presence of Sandy, who indeed is ever more careful of the interests of well-looking maids than becomes a man in his position.

But it is not the least of the troubles which continually beset my soul that I find none—no, not even suffering and contending ministers like Mr. Shields and Mr. Alexander Peden—wholly clear of this complicity with deceit. Jess Gowans is but a daft lassie without sense in the things of the spirit, more careful about the adorning of her frail tabernacle than concerned about the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Sandy, with all his high report as a leader among them that strive for the truth, is after all a fighter with carnal weapons rather than with spiritual. Even I myself, tender of conscience though I be and humbly eager to keep me unspotted from the world, am but a poor weak woman. What wonder if such as we fall into the error of deceit, in order to shield ourselves or those that are dear to us?

But that the very watchmen on the towers of Zion—those who go about her walls and ask, "What of the night?" should stumble and fall! Woe is me, for Scotland is poor indeed and fallen very low!

But of this matter I have a one tale to tell, and then I am done. These carnal matters of war, and the strife of men with men do but keep me from the review of my spiritual welfare. And what is worse, they keep me from the oft renewing of my covenant engagements undertaken in the Bass, at Darmead (that well-kenned place), and especially within the blessed weary prison of Blackness, where with my man Sandy I was confined so long, in a dark hole without a fireplace or any peep of the light of the sun.

I will tell the thing briefly. Once it chanced that Sandy was returning in haste to Galloway. It was in the darkest deeps of oppression, when Clavers and Lag had made of Galloway a hunting field—a hunting field with few hares and many hounds. For most of those that waited on the Lord had fled over-seas, and the few who remained were far in the deserts, darned deep in moss-hags or shivering under some granite block on the mountains of Minnigaff or Carrick.

Sandy had been in Holland, but was returning as fast as his feet could carry him. For the thought of his bairns was upon

him—and especially of another, the youngest, by his father yet all unseen.

My Sandy had grown tired on the long way betwixt Newcastle and the fair vale of the Glenkens. So on the sides of the Water of Crichope he had laid him down to sleep a while.

And so behind a whin bush he lay, drowned in sleep and slack with weariness, when it chanced that a noted King's man—Dalyell is the name that God will one day damn him by—passed that way riding to a meet of the men-hunters. As he rode his horse started and reared, for almost had he stumbled over the body of a sleeping man.

Sandy leaped up, and ere he could draw his sword, Dalyell called upon him to surrender. For the look of a Wanderer was stamped upon Sandy. And indeed, man to man there upon the wild moor, to give Alexander Gordon his due, little was it in his thought to deny it.

Then began a fight, which, but for the fear of the lust of the eye and the pride of life taking possession of me, I had been glad and proud to see. For the man on the black horse fought with the man with his bare feet on the heather, the cuirassed soldier with the man without armour defensive, save his ragged coat, or weapon offensive, except the long-bladed Andrea in his right hand.

And oft it seemed that Sandy Gordon must be overborne, for Dalyell rode well and fought furiously. But ever Sandy leaped lightly aside, and ever he kept on the side furthest from his enemy's sword arm, and cut at his left hand when Dalyell would have drawn his pistols out of the holster to shoot him down.

For, though often weak as other men in the things that are highest, few there be that can touch my man at the play with the steel blade (saving Wat Gordon of Lochinvar alone). I am, I trust, not over proud of this excelling in worldly warfare. But I set it down here because the tale must be told, and if I tell it not, none else will.

So Sandy's sword, after they had fought a long while, appeared to wrap itself about the blade of the King's man,

and presently Dalyell's weapon was jerked out of his hand and fell on the heather. Ere he could draw pistol or pull trigger, Dalyell was lying beside his sword, and a foot was on his breast and the shining steel at his throat.

"Quarter!" he cried with what breath was left him.

Then it was that Sandy ought to have remembered the well-considered motto of our Covenant battles, "No quarter for the active enemies of the Covenant!" But he was ever a man soft of heart, as most strong muckle men are. So he listened, instead of slaying the foul persecutor out of hand, as his duty was.

"And what for thy life?" he asked of his prisoner.

"I will promise thee aught save disloyalty to the King!" said Dalyell.

Then Sandy made a pact with the man ere he would undertake to save his life. He made him swear that whenever he should be in command of a party sent to disperse a conventicle or field meeting, if he should see a white flag hoisted midway up two banner staffs, he would draw off his men and permit the worshippers to retire in safety. Because he would then know that the man who had spared his life was amongst those that worshipped the Lord in that place.

This at the time seemed but little to promise as against his life. So Dalyell swore a great oath. And for a while he saw little of the banner, Sandy being gone to Holland again on a mission. But soon the promise became known, and, turn he east or west, on Solway-side or Edinburgh-ward, Dalyell and his troop were confronted with the white flag half-mast high on its double staves, till in his disgust he cried, "Surely this Whig must be the Devil himself—for ever going to and fro upon the earth, and walking up and down in it."

But though doubtless many lives were saved by this means, to me it is a thing passing grievous that these many noted preachers and men of God should have set up the lying standard which proclaimed as clearly as a spoken word, "Alexander Gordon is here," instead of the beautiful banner

of all true saints, "No quarter for open enemies of the Covenants."

But I am well aware that most are against me in this. Indeed I fear me much that poor Jean Hamilton, and perhaps (I do not know) her brother Sir Robert, are all that are left faithful to the true faith in all this weary realm of Scotland. And that is as much as to say in the world.

Alas, how few there be that shall be saved!

The End of the MSS. written by Jean Hamilton.

ON THE DUMFRIES ROAD

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GARPEL LYNN

It was that kindly and well-beloved man, the late Mr. Barbour of the Bogue, the son of "Cincinnatus Caledonius," the author of so many interesting books, who first guided me to Jean's Waa's. His father was the man who had first written down and published the now celebrated tradition of Jean's love-trouble. The son, full of the most delightful humour and sympathy—alas, too early cut off!—repeated the story as we brushed through the little copses of oak and hazel which fringe Garpel-side. It was high summer. The young broods were scattering on every side, and the burn went murmuring on beneath as we scrambled. I think we agreed with William Gordon the younger, who in the time of his sickness was cared for here, that Jean's Waa's was indeed "a rare and heartsome place to bide in on a summer's day. There was the sound of the birds singing, the plash of the water into the pool beneath the Holy

"Bogue."

Linn, where the ministers held their great baptizing of bairns, when the bonny burn water dropped of its own accord on their brows as their fathers held them up. There were the leaves rubbing against one another with a pleasant soughing noise. These (says William Gordon) kept my heart stirring and content as long as I abode in the Glen of the Garpel.

"There is in particular one little hill with a flat top, from which one may spy both up and down the glen, yet remain hidden under the leaves. Here I often frequented to go, though Sandy warned me that this would one day be my death. Yet I liked it best of all places in the daytime, and lay there prone on my belly for many hours together, very content, only chewing sorrel, clacking my heels together, and letting on that I was meditating. But, indeed, I never could look at water slipping away beneath me without letting it bear my thoughts with it, and leave me to the dreaming. And the Garpel is an especially pleasant burn to watch thus running away from you. I have often had the same feelings in church when the sermon ran rippleless and even over my head.

"The only thing that annoyed me was when on the Sabbath days the Garpel became a great place for lovers to convene. And above all, at one angle behind Jean Gordon's cot, there is a bower planted with wild flowers—pleasant and retired doubtless, for them that are equipped with a lass."[1]

Jean's Waa's.

Not only cosy but safe was the abode of Jean Gordon in these perilous times, and it was sitting on a stone, near that very Lovers' Bower, that Mr. Barbour told me over again the Tale of Jean's Waa's and of the faithless wooer who gaed up the lang glen of the Ken—alas, never to return!

"The cottage sat bonnily on the brink of a glen, and almost from my very window began the steep and precipitous descent. So that if the alarm were suddenly given, there was at least a chance of flinging myself out of the window and dropping into the tangled sides of the Linn of Garpel. The

[1] "The Men of he Moss-Hags," p. 237. (Isbister & Co.)

THE DEUCH WOOD, ROAD TO DALRY

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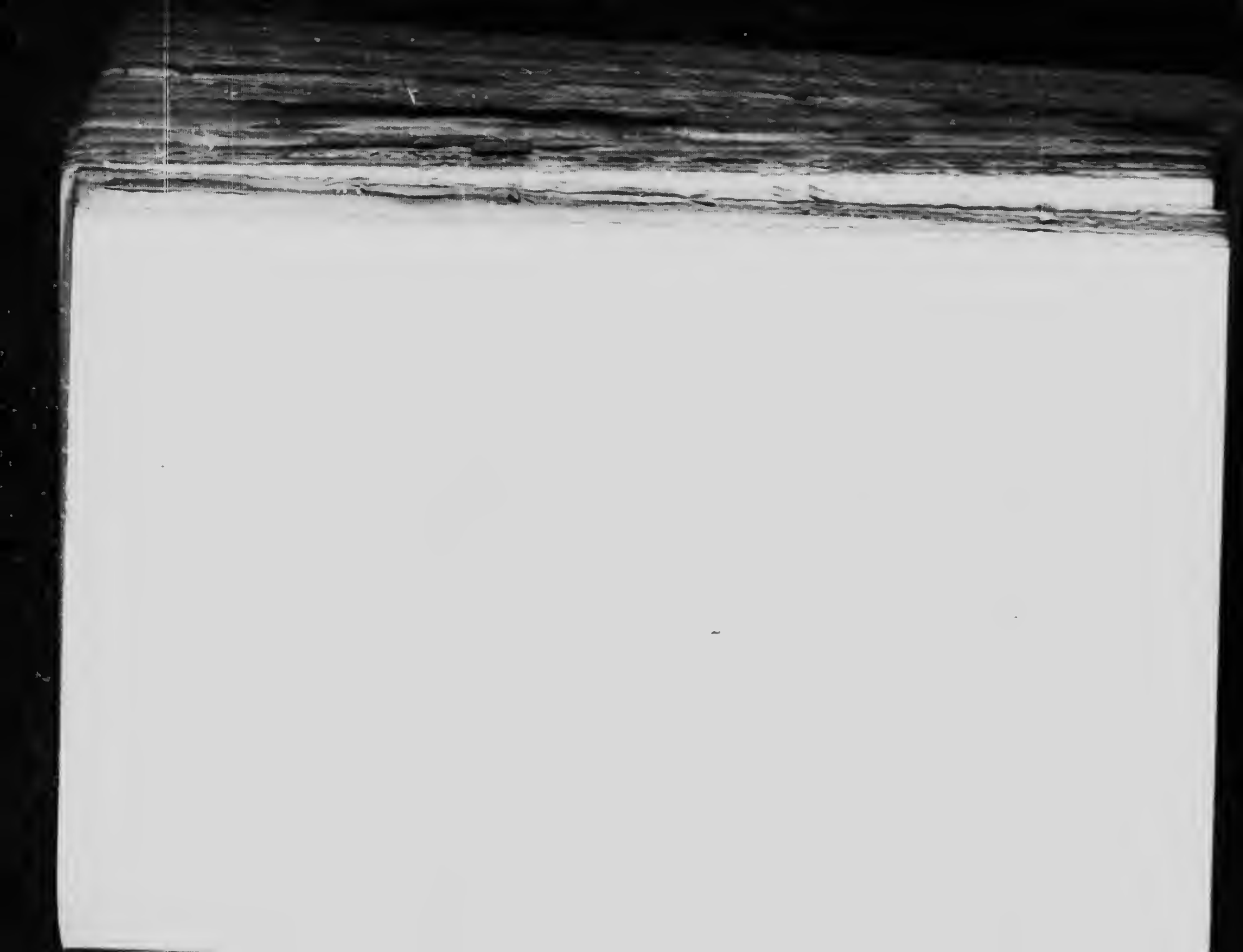

thought of the comfort of Jean's cot made me the more willing to take the risk. For I knew well that if I had to venture the damps and chills of the glen without any shelter after my illness, it would fare but poorly with me. So all that night I lay and listened to the murmur of the water beneath, dashing about the great upstanding rocks in the channel.

"But other sound there was none, and to this sweet sequestered spot came no one to seek us.

"Here in the fastnesses of the Garpel, Sandy and I abode many days. And though the glen was searched, and patrol parties more than once came our way, not one of them approached near the fastness of thickets where in the daytime we were hidden. And each night, in all safety, I betook me to the cottage of Jean Gordon.

"Jean's story has been a sad one, but she made little of it now, though it was well known to all the county side."

"'The Lord has taken away the stang of pain out of my life,' she said. 'I was but a lass when I came to the Garpel, thinking my heart broken. Yince I loved a braw lad, bonny to look upon—and he loved me, or I was the mair deceived. Lindsay was his name. Doubtless ye have heard the common tale. He slighted my love and left me without a word. Waes me, but the very lift turned black when I heard it, and I cried out on the liars that said the like! But belief came slowly to me. The loch is very near to the Shirmers where at that time I dwelt, and the window looks down into the black deeps from among the ivy bushes on the wall. My thoughts ofttimes turned on that short and easy road to peace. But praise be to His marvellous name, I saw another way. So I biggit me this bit cottage on the bonny birk-grown sides of the Garpel, and e'en came my ways to bide here.

"'Ye'll sune get a man, for ye're bonny! Never fash your thumb for Lindsay!' said my kin.

"'I'll get nae man,' I threepit to them. 'What one slighted shall never be given to another!' So forty year have I bidden here, and heard little but the mavis sing and the

cushie complain. Think weel o' yersel', Willie lad, for ye a
the first man body that has ever bidden the nicht within Jea
Waa's. Sandy, great as he thinks himsel', can tak' the Lin
side for it. He is weather-seasoned like the red tod o' t
hills; but ye are shilpit and silly, boy William, so ye h
best bide wi' auld Jean when ye can."[1]

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 230. (Isbister & Co.)

CHAPTER XXV

LOCHINVAR LOCH

WILD, grey, plain moorland to the eye, crossed and barred with purple streaks of moss-hags innumerable, and in the midst, the brown peaty loch with its little island of water-worn stones—that is Lochinvar. Perhaps the level of the water has at some recent period been raised artificially. There are signs of such a work having been attempted at the western-most end, but it is indeed almost incredible that the Gordons of Lochinvar ever had a castle, or even a tower on the little island which remains in the loch. To the ordinary observer Edie Ochiltree's famous prætorium, put together by some "mason lads and twa-three herds" is as much as the appearances warrant.

But the eye of faith and romance can still see peace and silence cincturing the ancient tower of Lochinvar like the blue circle of the vault of heaven—and Kate and Wat Gordon walking the battlements. "It was a narrow promenade, but they kept the closer together. From the gable chimneys immediately above them, the blue perfumed reek of a peat fire went up straight as a monument."

The Eye of Faith.

To use the boat upon the loch and visit with scientific purpose the mound of water-worn cobbles certainly provokes unbelief. But one may still stand on the peaty brows above the water in the hush of evening and thrill to the thought of the young Lochinvar's return to the house of his father before he spoke "that word in her ear" which rendered his name for ever famous in song and romance.

"It was evening of a great, solemn, serene September day when Wat reached the edges of the loch, upon the little island in the midst of which stood the tower of his forebears. There was no smoke going up from its chimneys. The water slept black from the very margin, deeply stained with peat. The midges danced and balanced; the moor-birds cried; the old owl hooted from the gables; the retired stars twinkled reticently above, just as they had done in Wat's youth.

"The little grey keep on its lonely islet towering above him, seemed not so high as of old. It was somehow strangely shrunken. The isle, too, had grown smaller to his travelled eye—probably was so, indeed, for the water had for many years been encroaching on the narrow insular policies of the tower of Lochinvar.

"There to his right was the granite 'snibbing-post,' to which the boat was usually tied. The pillar had, he remembered, a hole bored through the head of it with a chip knocked out of the side—for making which with a hammer he had been soundly cuffed by his father. And there was the anchored household boat itself, nodding and rocking under the northern castle wall, where it descends abruptly into the deeps of the loch.

"Wat stood under the carved archway and clattered on the door with a stone picked from the water-side. For the great brass knocker which he remembered so well had been torn off, no doubt during the recent troubles.

"It was long indeed ere any one came to answer the summons, and meanwhile Wat stood, dripping and shaking, consumed with deadly weakness, yet conscious of a still more deadly strength. If God would only help him ever so little, he thought—would grant him but one night's quiet rest, he could yet do all that which he had come so fast and far to accomplish.

"At last he heard a stir in the tower above. A footstep came steadily and lightly along the stone passages. The thin gleam of a rushlight penetrated beneath the door, and shed a

THE COUNTRY NEAR CARSPHAIRN

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solid ray through the great worn key-hole. The bolts growled and screeched lustily, as if complaining at being so untimely disturbed. The door opened, and there before Wat stood a sweet, placid-browed old lady in laced cap and stomacher—even the Jean Gordon of ancient days."[1]

[1] "Lochinvar," p. 409. (Methuen & Co.)

THE MUIR ROAD, NEWTON-STEWART TO NEW GALLOWAY

CHAPTER XXVI

PURPLE GALLOWAY

THERE are many purple patches in Galloway. One cannot in autumn get out of sight of the heather—save, perhaps, in some parts of the green parish of Borgue. But, towards the north, there is one great purple province which stretches from within sight of Ailsa and Loch Ryan till it is barred by the azure waters of Loch Ken.

"In Wigtonshire this country of heather is called the Moors. In Kirkcudbrightshire it is the country of the Lochs, or perhaps more generally now—the Raiders' Country. It is a place of flocks and herds, with here and there a lonely farmhouse set white on the waste. But these are growing ever rarer, as more and more of the holdings become "led"

farms—that is, farms stocked and held by some absentee, so that the land is administered for miles and miles only by a stray shepherd or two. Though there are few made roads, there are many travelled ways into these wilds. Some with time, provend, and a stout heart may assay the track of the original Raiders themselves, part of which may be seen from the train. For here the Portpatrick Railway plunges into a moss-covered granite wilderness of bog and moor, where there is hardly even a shepherd's hut to the half-dozen miles, and where the rare passage of a train is an occasion for commotion among scattered groups of black-faced sheep. Here the surfaceman's section of railway metals gives him little work, but a good deal of healthy exercise. The ewes breaking down the fences and straying on the line-side, or the hill-torrents coming down the granite gullies, foaming white after a water-spout, and tearing into his embankments, undermining his metals and sleepers, are the most pressing troubles of his life."[1]

Bog and Moor.

To the sturdy walker nothing more fruitful in pleasure can be recommended than the tramp across country out of the Glenkens into the fortress and fastness of Galloway. Good quarters can usually be obtained at the shepherd's cottage at the southern end of Loch Dee, where they are well accustomed to putting up fishers. Those who like the shortest way may diverge from the New Galloway and Newton-Stewart road at Clatteringshaws. There they will see the basin of Loch Dee straight before them, and (in a dryish season) the going is not difficult. The Links of the Cooran and the Dungeon of Buchan, to the northward, are, of course, no place for any who are not prepared to rough it in the roughest way, and the state of the upper waters of the Dee should be ascertained at Clatteringshaws before starting out on the long cross-country tramp.

As was the case with Sammle Tamson and the hero of "The Raiders" (p. 204) "you will have the Black Craig of Dee close above you, and as you ascend towards the crown of the

[1] "The Stickit Minister," p. 39. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

moorland, you will be able to review the whole of the lan backwards, with its lochs and lochans, clints and mosses"— if not quite to the little white house of Mossdale itself, a least to Cairn Edward and the Bennan which look dow upon it.

From the "Great Corry which lies to the west of th Black Craig of Dee, between the Hill o' the Hope and th Rig o' Craig Gilbert," you may also be able to see "th reeking chimneys of the Laggan of Dee, and the Links of th Black Water itself, shining amid the dull yellows and greys o the grim mosses through which, very slowly, it makes its way. But I question much if even the sharpest eyes will be abl to trace the ancient "drove road" which used to wimple acros heather and morass, southward in the direction of the Wate of Cree.

In the wild and lawless times of good two hundred year ago, smuggling and cattle-raiding went hand in hand Smugglers were, of course, not all outlaws like the hill-raider and "cairds." They were generally either seafaring men wh looked upon smuggling as a profession, or the sons of respect able shore folk prepared to do a little "cross-work," half fo the guineas and half for the adventure. But at any rat raiders and smugglers worked into each others' hands, an made a combination very difficult to break up in that wil time and country.

The "Free Traders."

"In the palmy days of the traffic with the Isle of Man that tight little island supplied the best French brandy fo the drouthy lairds of half Scotland—also lace fo the 'keps' and stomachers of their dames, no to speak of the Sabbath silks of the farmer's good wife, wherewith she showed that she had as proper a respect for herself in the house of God as my lady herself in her braws.

"Take it how you like. Solway shore was a lively place in those days, and it was worth something to be in the swim of the traffic. Aye, or even to have a snug farmhouse, with perhaps a hidden cellar or two, on the main trade-routes to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Much of the better stuff was run

by the 'Rerrick Night-hawks,' gallant lads who looked upon the danger of the business as a token of high spirit, and considered that the revenue laws of the land were simply made to be broken—an opinion in which they were upheld generally by the people of the whole countryside, not even excepting those of the austere and Covenanting sort."[1]

These smugglers and gypsies had regular routes by which they conveyed their smuggled stuff to Edinburgh on the east, and to Glasgow or Paisley on the west. So complete was their system, and so great their daring, that it is safe to say that there was not a farmer's greybeard between the Lothians and the Solway filled with spirit that had done obeisance to king or queen, and not a burgher's wife who wore duty-paid lace on her Sabbath mutch. The royal gaugers were few and harmless, contenting themselves for the most part with lingering round public-houses in towns, or bearing a measure-cup and gauging-stick about the markets—occupations for which they were entirely suited.

Above all there was a district of thirty miles square in Carrick, in Galloway, and the Moors of the Shire, over whose border never exciseman put his nose, except with a force of red soldiers at his tail—which did not happen once in twenty years. Moreover, the farmers and small proprietors of the day were better content to pay a kind of scaith-mail to the hill-raiders than to dwell in constant fear of them.

So long, therefore, as their own cattle were let alone, the bonnet lairds and farmers of Balmaghie and the Glenkens were little likely to come to blows with the gipsies or the smugglers in defence of other people's flocks and herds. The following was their mode of procedure on the safe arrival of a cargo in one of the numerous "ports" round the rocky shore. From the coves by the shore a great number of men came running with the cargo—kegs of spirit, Hollands boxes wrapped about with wheat-straw—strange cases from the Indies where the Hollanders have many plantations—iron-lined boxes of lace, these most precious of all. As many packages

[1] "Bog-Myrtle and Peat," p. 288. (Sands & Co.)

as the horses were able to carry were loaded for the northward journey. The rest were taken to pits dug out under the scarps of precipices, or in the sides of the glens, and covered again with green turf.

So the long train set off, a bevy of wild loons keeping the pack-horses moving with slender, pointed goads, cut from the nearest coppice. The horsemen of the smuggling party clattered ahead with great barrels slung at each side of their horses, secured under the belly with broad leather straps, and clinched by strength of arm and the leverage of foot against the side of the poor beast—the worst of whose sufferings were past, however, as soon as they were upon the way, for the jolting of the load soon eased both straps and fastenings.

The smugglers were the more jovial of the two parties, for the gipsies had their hands deeper in crime than the Free-traders, having been art and part in house-burning and cattle-stealing, and so rode with their necks in danger. But the land smugglers, many of whom had no interest in the affair save to get the goods comfortably stowed, were usually more than merry, for it was their custom that a cask should be kept free and open for use by the way. And as they went they sang—

> "Where'er we see a bonny lass, we'll caa' as we gae by;
> Where'er we meet wi' liquor guid, we'll drink an we be dry.
> There's brandy at the Abbeyburn, there's rum at Heston Bay,
> And we will go a-smuggling afore the break o' day."[1]

It is not, however, till after leaving behind these "two very desolate hills," Craignell and Darnaw, that from the last undulation of the long rolling Kells Range the wayfarer can see the final home and headquarters of the Raiders on the shores of Loch Dee.

"Here the cattle (says the original record) were straying wide, watched only by boys on the green meadows of the two Laggans by the loch-side. A very great number of the poor

[1] "The Raiders," p. 171. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

THE ROAD TO CARSPHAIRN

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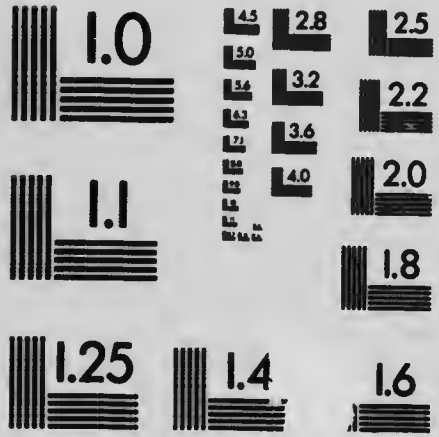

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beasts were standing in the water of the loch cooling their travel-weary feet and drinking deep draughts.

"We were now on the smooth side of the farthest spur of Millyea, the last of the Kells Range, which pushed its wide shoulders on into the north, heave behind heave, like a school of pellocks in the Firth. I was astonished at their height and greenness, never having in my life seen a green hill before, and supposing that all mountains were as rugged and purple with heather, or else as grey with boulder as our own Screel and Ben Gairn by the Balcary shore. But these I found were specially granted by a kind Providence to afford *yirds* and secret caves for our Solway smugglers.

"It has indeed always been counted a Divine judgment on the people of the Glenkens that their hills are so smooth, that the comings and goings of men and horses upon them can be seen afar, and the smoke of a whisky-still tracked for a summer day's journey. But then, again, if the Glenkens folk had been able to supply themselves with whisky, the Solway farmers, like my friends the Maxwells, would have had to go farther afield in order to seek a market for their wares.

"But all things are wisely ordered, and amongst others it was ordained that I should now be on the side of Millyea looking towards the great breastwork of the Dungeon of Buchan, behind which lay the outlaw country shrouded in dark and threatening mist."

No one who has attempted to scale the Dungeon of Buchan from the Long Loch to the levels of Enoch, will consider the following description overdrawn. It is a strange, weird place at all times, but in a thunderstorm it becomes quite unearthly.

"The huge clouds were topping the black and terrible ramparts opposite to me. Along the vast cliff line, scarred and broken with the thunderbolt, the clouds lay piled, making the Merrick, the Star, the Dungeon, and the other hills of that centre boss of the hill country look twice their proper height. The darkness drew swiftly down like a curtain. The valley was filled with a steely blue smother. From the white

clouds along the top of the Dungeon of Buchan fleec streamers were blown upwards, and swift gusts spirted down Behind, the thunder growled like a continuous roll of drums and little lambent flames played like devils' smiles about th grim features of Breesha and the Snibe. Yonder were th frowning rocks of the Dungeon itself farthest to the north and that great hollow-throated pass through which still peep of sunshine shot mistily down, bore the grim name o the Wolf's Slock. Thither I must climb. Yet though ther was no light in it, it was through it that I could best see th hell-brew of elements which was going on up there. Here o the side of the opposite brae did I lie face down on the gras and heather and look upward. The wind came in curious extremes—now in low warm puffs and gusts, and then again in sharp, cold *bensles* that froze the blood in one's veins.

"But to resolve is ever easier than to do. Between me and the frowning ridges—now the colour of darkest indigo, with the mists clammily creeping up and down and making the rocks unwholesomely white, as if great slimy slugs had crawled over them—were the links of the Cooran winding slow, leaden, and dangerous. And there beyond them was the Silver Flowe of Buchan.

"As I went on, the ground became wetter and boggier. My foot sank often to the ankle, and I had to shift my weight suddenly with an effort, drawing my imprisoned foot out of the oozy, clinging sand with a great 'cloop,' as if I had begun to decant some mighty bottle. Green, unwholesome scum on the edges of the black pools frothed about my brogues, which were soon wet through. Then came a link of silver, where the sand was flat and firm to the eye. My heart beat at the pleasant sight, but when I set foot upon its surface a shivering flash like lightning flamed suddenly over it, and it gripped my feet like a vice. Had I not been shore bred, and that on Solway side, I would have passed out of life even then. But I knew the trick of it, and threw myself flat towards the nearest bank of grass, kicking my feet free horizontally, and so

The Links of the Cooran.

crawled an inch at a time back to the honest peat again. Then I found a great shepherd's stick lying on a link of the Cooran—a wide, black, unkindly-like water, seen under that gloomy sky, whatever it may appear in other circumstances. It had been placed there by some shepherd who had business on the other side, or mayhap had been cast up by that dangerous water after it had drowned the man who used it."[1]

I have passed the worst of this way myself in my younger days, and so (I have been informed) have others since. But truth to tell, the Silver Flowe and the Links of the Cooran are no safe places even for shepherds. And certainly no one should go there in a wet season, and above all unaccompanied by some one who knows the country well.

There is, however, a plain road past the south end of Loch Dee over into Glen Trool, and, after what has been said, any one who takes the Dungeon of Buchan route, takes it at his peril and not unwarned.

How Patrick Heron climbed the precipice of Craignairny, and what he found there, can be sought for in its proper place. I have often looked for Eggface's hut and the red scar from which the landslip came down. But though there are a good many of the latter, I have never been able to find any trace of the House of the Black Chest. As for the Murder Hole, that is quite another matter. It is there to speak for itself—or, at least, what stands very well for it.

There is yet another road for adventurers into the secret things of the hills. Near to the Bridge of Dee Water, there branches off to the right, the road to Craigencailzie. Starting very early, and leaving one's cycle at the farm, it is an engaging road to follow on foot.

"It was a keen autumn morning, about six of the clock, the sun just rising over the top of Millfore to the east. I went out to observe, as is my custom, the dawn. It was a true autumnal sunrise of the moors, rich and smoky, with the pinks-and-reds of summer all deepened to russet and misty gold, infinitely more lovely withal, like a plain schoolgirl miss who, to

[1] "The Raiders," p. 223. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

her own surprise, grows beautiful at twenty. With a keen sense of enjoyment I stood watching the moorbirds busy about their avocations, the snipe circling and quavering far overhead, the knot and dotterel going twittering down to the shallow pools to wet their legs, the heron standing like statues in the lochs to spear eels and young pike, and, what was as much part of the scheme of nature and life up in these solitudes, the blue smoke-drifts from Hector Faa's Shieling which rose along the rock-scarp of the Dungeon and disengaged themselves impalpably from the verge, like mist drawn upward by the sun's heat, ere they melted into the bluer blue too fine for human sight to follow them further."

Even in the times of the Levellers there seems to have been a farm hereabouts. For we find the hero describing his journeyings over the world of heather in these words :—

"Presently we came to a little farm-steading, or something as much smaller than that, as my lady's spaniel is less than my lord's hound. The group of buildings, called Craigencailzie, seemed to be castaway, deserted, left forlorn and derelict amid that world of heather. And yet it was evident that folk lived there, and folk, moreover, not ill-provided with the necessities of life. Within some stables close at hand we could hear the sound of horses shifting their iron-shod hoofs in the but-end of the dwelling-house and cattle munching placidly in their stalls. It all sounded to me good and friendly, and of the Lowlands —though we had descended upon the place out of the very heart of the wilds, and, indeed, as I afterwards found, the heather grew up to the doors on all sides.

"The name of the place was, as I say, Craigencailzie, and there was a well-marked track from it across the waste to the great Irish drove road which runs by the new town of Galloway to Dumfries." And so there is still.

Note.—I must not forget Lochenbreck away yonder to the right (reached most directly by Laurieston and Castle-Douglas). The purple brows of its heathery hills overlook the house where I was born. It has seen many régimes as a hotel and

"Spa," and I have known it under all. At present (1904) it is renewing its youth, and in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Priest is the only well-conducted moorland hotel in Galloway. Set as it is on the broad face of the heather, there is not much to do there. To *be* at Lochenbreck is sufficient, but, especially in a dry year, when the bogs are passable, no more charming place of residence can be desired. Lochenbreck is about seven and a half miles from New Galloway Station and nine from Castle-Douglas. If peace and quiet are attainable anywhere in the kingdoms three, it is there.

ON THE ROAD TO CARSPHAIRN

CHAPTER XXVII

CLASHDAAN

CLASHDAAN lies immediately above Loch Dee, and forms th southernmost end of the wild Dungeon ridge which shuts in th country of the lochs. It should certainly be climbed, if no for the sake of "Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills," at least fo the sake of the magnificent view, and because it is the mos thunder-battered of all the hills about, Craiglee, Craignaw Curlywee, not even excepting the Dungeon itself. Any stra shepherd, if fairly spoken and with a little time on his hands will show a traveller more of the effects of lightning on thi single hill than an average geologist is apt to see in a lifetime.

My friend, Mr. M'Millan of Glenhead, was present with me at one such scene, which I have done my best to describe elsewhere. It will be many years before that deeply scored record is erased from the side of Clashdaan where it looks ou upon Loch Dee.

It is of the gipsy Harry Polwart, Hector Faa's lieutenant, that the record speaks.

"He had his course accurately marked, and after passing Loch Dee he bore away up the side of Curleywee, the peewits scattering and whinnying before him. He followed

a little stream which came down the mountain, dispersing its waters into sprays a dozen times, again collecting them apparently undiminished in volume, sending them to sleep in half-a-score of shallow lakelets and a deep unruffled tarn, and finally in one great white spout of foam, dropping them into the valley far below.

"Without a word spoken on either side, Joyce and her companion took this goat's track up the mountain-side. They were just on the border lands of Lamachan and Curleywee. Above them the blue thunderclouds streamed eastward at a uniform height along the side of the great precipitous ridge of Bennanbrack. Up, up they went, Joyce scarce wondering whither they were going, but blindly obeying, and in a certain sick and weary-hearted way glad to obey—to do anything, and to keep on doing it.

"Harry Polwart did not slacken his speed till the stagnant airs of the valley began to give place to an occasional puff of icy wind blown downwards from above. He was marching right upward into the thunder-cloud. Joyce felt more than once the sting of hail in her face. Suddenly a whitish-grey tongue of cloud came rushing towards them, at the sight of which the gipsy uttered a warning cry, and Joyce caught at a projecting corner of rock, which gave way under her hand. **Thunder on Clashdaan.**

"In a moment the gipsy had sprung to her side, and pulled her down behind a huge boulder, which, after sliding so far, remained perilously poised on the mountain-side. He put his arm about Joyce and forced her into a crevice of the rock—standing in front of her, as the threatening arm reached out as if to snatch them from their refuge. As it came nearer, Joyce saw a funnel-shaped cloud, with the point spinning like a top along the mountain-side. It rushed upon them. The next moment, with a tremendous explosion of sound and a blinding pale-violet light, the world seemed to end, and the heart of Joyce Faa gave a bound of thankfulness. God had surely heard her prayer. The end had come! The thunder-bolt had smitten them both!

"But the next instant, against the rushing vapours of cloud, Joyce saw the figure of Harry the gipsy stand out a certain wild nobility. His hands were outstretched, as it were, striking palm-forward against some horror. great boulder behind which they stood had disappeared a wild débris of fragments, chips, and granite dust. ground was torn up in all directions—here in great gashes if a gigantic ploughshare had passed that way; there, i myriad of shallow tunnels, as purposeless and wandering so many mole-runs."

More almost than any imagined character of whom I h written, the vision of Mad Sir Uchtred, the Persecutor, Beast-Man, possessed me. The public apparently does agree with me, placing him at the bottom of my list of yea sales. Nevertheless, once on a day I sat on Clashdaan a shuddered when I thought of him, and I hope some ascend Clashdaan for the sake of "the Man Hunted w Dogs."

"The indigo night, winking with stars, bent over Cla daan. Uchtred the Beast-Man went back to his lair in t

The Man Hunted with Dogs.

Hass of the Wolf's Slock, dancing along the frett pinnacles of the granite as a withered leaf danc in the veering flaw of November. His famil followed after, trailing a limb. To see the against the sky was to believe in devils; and that is sou and wholesome doctrine.

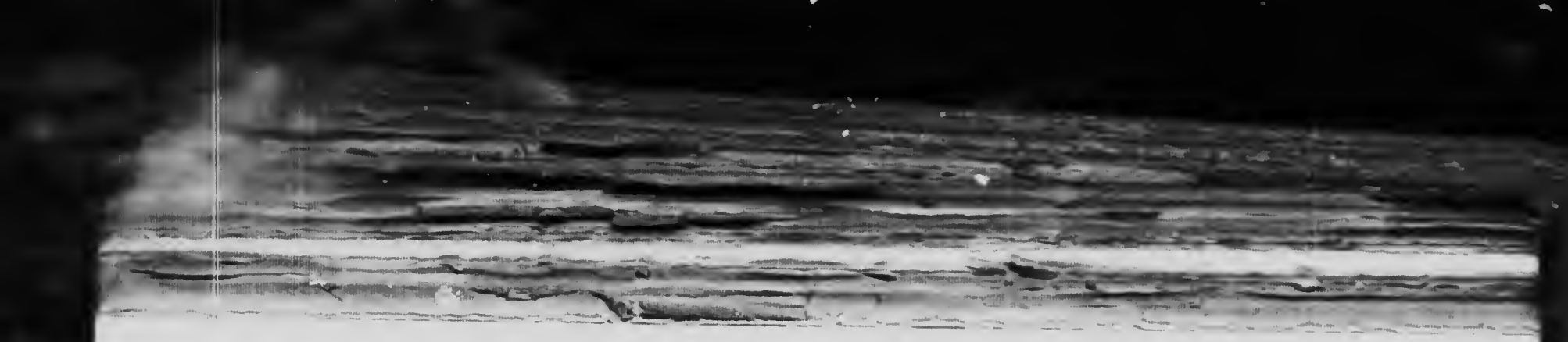
"The cave on Clashdaan was but a fox-earth betwe two stones; but it was overgrown with matted heather, a being set on a promontory it was a watch-tower looking thr ways over the blue cauldron of the Dungeon of Buchan.[1]

"Then the night came, a serene and austere coolne settled down on the hills. The world was full of sweet a to breathe. The bog-myrtle, which here men name 'gal gave forth a rare smell. It was very silent on Clashdaa The hills that shut it in on the north glowed darkest amethys and the lakelets and tarns shone uncertainly in the hollow

[1] "Mad Sir Uchtred," p. 126. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

APPROACH TO THE MURDER HOLE

To face p. 268



But on all the hills there was not a sound save of a stone that clattered down a slide of shale and slate.

"When Uchtred awoke the morning was breaking in the east. The red bars of cloud glowed like a furnace grate. The crest of the Dungeon bristled black against the fire. There was no sound, save a burn soughing somewhere in the hollows of the hills. But above the birds cried in the dewy chill of the sun-rising. Sir Uchtred came to himself and looked about him. . . ."

THE BRIDGE OVER THE BLACK WATER

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE COUNTRY OF THE LOCHS

THE Scot has the primitive instinct of nomenclature. When his name does not begin with "Mac," or end in "son," he is generally a Wright, a Herd, a Shepherd, a Crock Herd, a Smith, a Black, a Brown, a Grey, or a Reid. His houses, when not named imaginatively but obscurely in the aboriginal Gaelic, are Blinkbonnies, Buss-o'-Bields, Hermitages, Glowerower-'ems, and Cuddle-cozies. Beyond the Dungeon o' Buchan, the Black Craig o' Dee looks to the three Cairnsmores, and the most northerly of these passes on the regard to the Hill o' the Windy Standard. These are picturesque compounds, mostly of Saxon speech; the others, that is, nine out of ten place-names in Galloway, are still more sonorous and imaginative in Erse.

Galloway Names.

"Listen! Ben Gairn and Ben Yelleray, Craigronald, Nel-

dricken, Mulwharchar, and the Rig o' the Star, Loch Macaterick and Loch Enoch, Loch Valley and lonely Loch Moan—it is as if the grim primeval spirits had sat up there, each on his own particular mountain-top, and bandied polysyllables instead of bombarding each other with granite boulders."[1]

And in this encounter the country of the lochs does more than its share. All these last-quoted names are to be found between Loch Macaterick and the Glen of Trool. And a dozen more, fully as strange, though not quite so sonorous, occur to me as I write—such as the Jarkness, Loch Aron, the Breesha, the Snibe, the Spear o' the Merrick, and the Dungeon o' Buchan.

Lawless-looking names they are, and two hundred years and more ago they marked the abiding-place of a most lawless folk. So at least tradition, uniform and authentic, avers. Nor does the account given in "The Raiders" seem much exaggerated.

"The greater part of these tribes herded together in the upper hill-country—the No Man's Sheriffdom, on the borders of the three counties of Kirkcudbright, Wigtoun, and Ayr—were broken men from the Border clans and septs—wild Eliots, bystart Beatties from the debateable land, or even outlaw Scots fleeing from the wrath of their own chief, the Warden of the Marches. With them there were the Macatericks, a sept of cairds (sturdy rascals) from the wilder parts of North Carrick and the Upper Ward.

"All these outlaw folk used to plunder the men of the middle hills till the Lesmahago Whigs rose into power, in the high days of Presbytery before the return of Charles Stewart, the second of the name, weary fa' him! Then these, being decent God-fearing men, of a dour and lofty spirit, and all joined very close by the tie of a common religion, and by the Covenants (National and Solemn League), rose and made an end of the Macatericks, driving them forth of their country with fire and sword.

"Those who escaped betook themselves to the wilds of the moorlands, where no writ ran, no law was obeyed, and no

[1] "Cinderella," p. 329. (James Clarke & Co.)

warrant was good unless countersigned with a musket. In the dark days of the Killing, this country (which seems fitted to be the great sanctuary of the persecuted), was more unsafe for them than any part in the wilds. For this reason that there were always informers there who, for hire, would bring the troopers on the poor hunted wretches, cowering with their ragged clothes and tender consciences in moss-hags and among the great rocks of granite.

"Then in the times which followed, all the land was swiftly pacified, save only the 'cairds'' country—the cairds being the association of the outlaw clans that had gathered there. It seems strange that, so long as their depredations were within bounds, no man interfered with their marauding, so that they took many cattle, and as many sheep as they had need of. As to their country itself, no man had the lairdship of it, though my Lords Stewart of Garlies have long claimed some rights over it. For centuries the whole of it belonged to the country of the Kennedies, and all the world knows that they were no better than they should be. As for lifting a drove of cattle from the lowlands, it had been done by every Macaterick for generations, though generally from Carrick or the Machars, where the people are less warlike than in Galloway itself."[1]

In making the journey to Enoch, fatiguing enough in any case, the beauty of hill and water is so amazing that the traveller (if he takes my advice) will see as much as he can, draw, photograph, observe, and—read all about it in the next copy of "The Raiders" which comes under his hand.

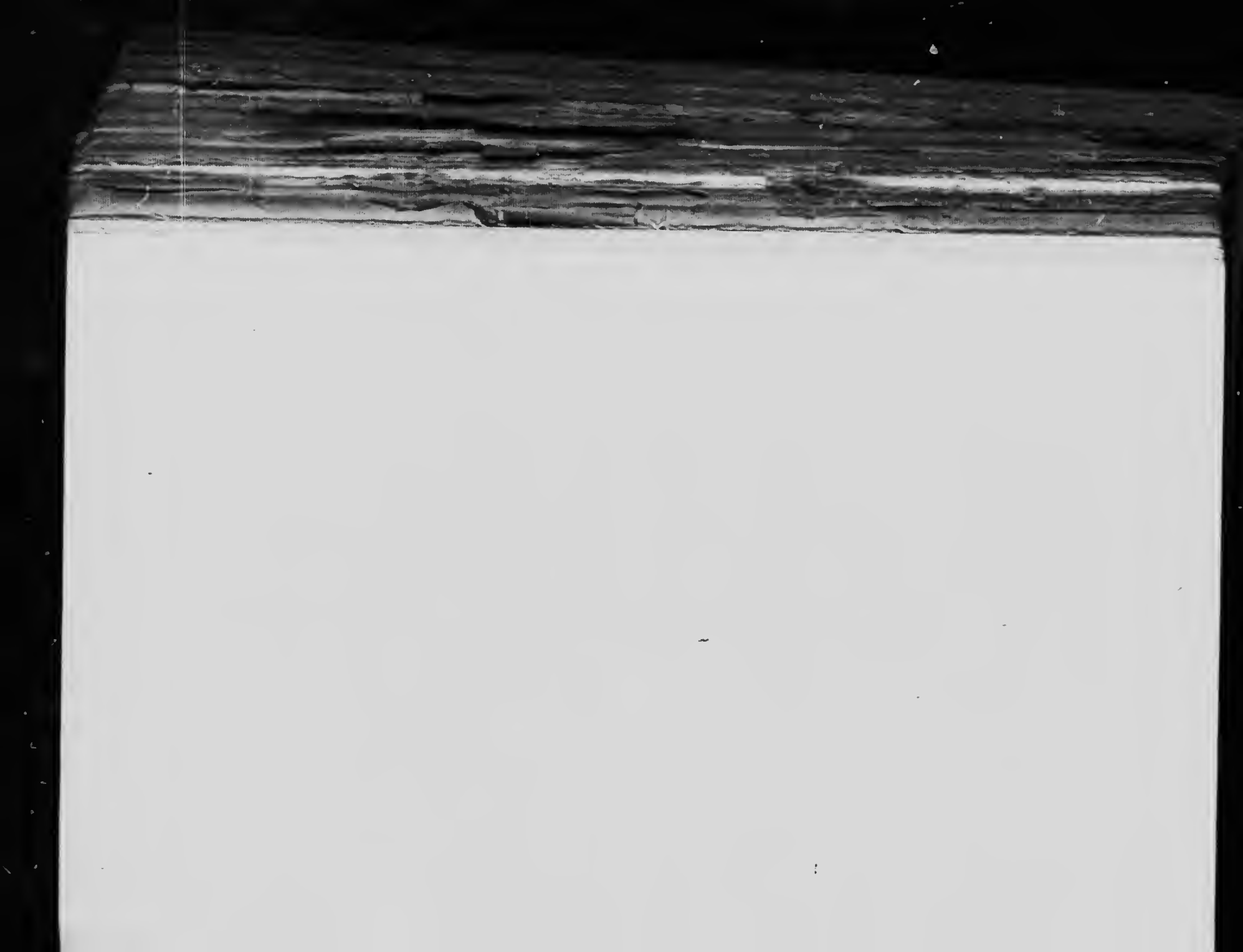
But, since such is my duty, I will say a word about each of the lochs in order. First, there are the twin lochs of Glenhead, picturesque "gowpenfuls" of water hidden among the heather—no more than a foretaste of what is to come.

High up on the side of Craiglee, too, lies the Dhu Loch, a kind of weird, oblong, giant's bath, quite near the summit of the ridge—sullen and black, overhung by grey crags, and deep to the very edge—altogether one of the most impressive sights

[1] "The Raiders," p. 127. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

NEWTON-STEWART

To face p. 272



on all the face of the moorland. It seems a place where a murder might have been done, and the body disposed of (with a stone or so in the neuk of a plaid), without the least trouble.

We look down upon Loch Valley from mounds of glacial moraine huge and thick. The remains of the broken dam can still be made out at the beginning of the burn—broken through by that outburst which my friend Mr. MacMillan was witness of—not by that which is described by Mr. Patrick Heron.

"When we came to the southern side of Loch Valley, whence the Gairland Burn issues, we saw a strange and surprising sight. There was a deep trench, the upper part of which had been recently cut through by the hands of man, for the rubbish lay all about where the spades had been at work. The ends of a weir across the outlet of the loch were yet to be seen jutting into the rushing waters. This had evidently been constructed with considerable care, and certainly with immense labour. But now it was cut clean through, and we could see where their sappers had first set their picks; the power of the flood had done the rest. So great had been the force of the water that the passage was clean cut as with a knife down to the bed rock. The deep knoll of sand and jingling stones, which lies like a barrier across the mouth of the loch, had been severed as one cuts sweet-milk cheese, and the black waters were yet pouring out from under the arch of ice that spanned the loch as out of a cave in some frozen Tartarus."

Loch Valley.

To this follows a space of crag and rock, and then, tortuously disposed in a rocky basin, with frowning heights rising about it on all sides, is Loch Neldricken. We have crossed the Mid-burn near the old sheep *rees*, and it is lucky for us if we have managed the transit without wetting our feet. For the Mid-burn is an unruly stream and often comes raging down, uncontrollable as the Gairland itself. The *sheep-rees*, where for defence the assailants of the raider Faas are said to have sheltered, are indeed "solidly built of great granite stones like a fortress, based upon the unshaken ribs of the hills."

"The Murder Hole."

But, strangest of all the strange things about Loch N
dricken, is that circle of dull, oily-looking water surroun
with tall reeds towards its north-western shore, which has b
named "The Murder Hole."

Patrick Heron had experience of it one winter's ni
when, as he says, "I sallied forth, binding my ice-runners
curved iron to my feet at the little inlet where the Mid-b
issues—too strong and fierce ever to freeze, save only at
edges where the frost and spray hung in fringes, reaching do
cold fingers to clasp the rapid waters.

"Away to the left stretched Loch Neldricken, the midm
of the three lochs of that wild high region—Valley, N
dricken, and topmost Enoch. I set foot gingerly on the smoo
black ice, with hardly even a sprinkling of snow upon it.
the winds had swept away the little feathery fall, and the s
face was smooth as glass beneath my feet.

. . . . . .

"I was carried swiftly along, and there, not twenty ya
before me, like a hideous black demon's eye looking up at
lay the unplumbed depths of the Murder Hole, in which,
the second time, I came nigh to being my own victim. I
membered the tales told of it. It never froze; it was ne
whitened with snow. With open mouth it lay ever waiting, l
an insatiable beast, for its tribute of human life; it never ga
up a body committed to its depths, or broke a murderer's tru

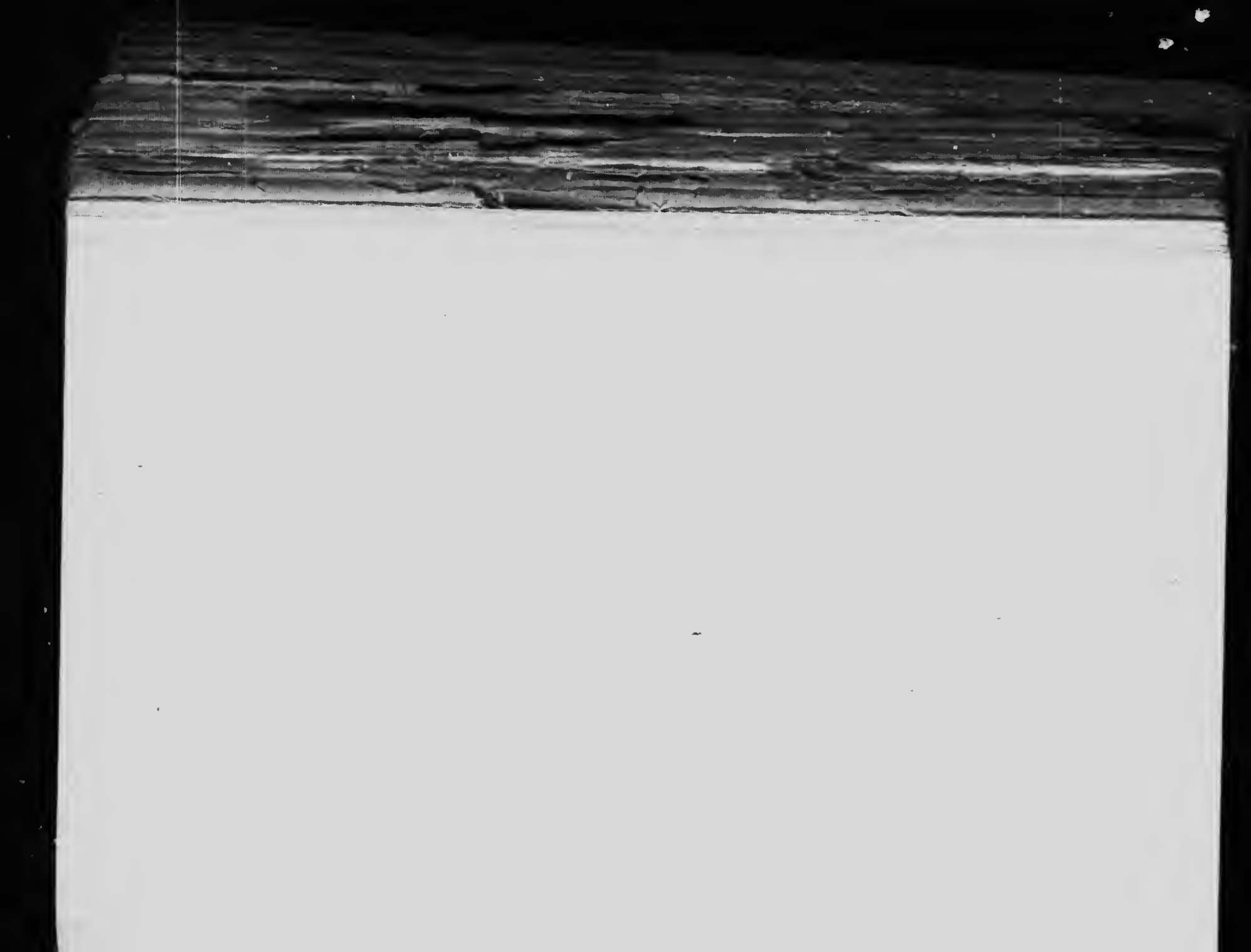
"The thin ice swayed beneath me, but did not crack
which was the worse sign, for it was brittle and weakened
the reeds. The lip of the horrid place seemed to shoot out
me, and the reeds opened to show me the way I had
myself down on all fours as I came among the rushes; now
laid hold of them as I swept along, and so came to a standst
but a little way from that black verge."[1]

Somebody (I do not remember who) once remarked
me that there was more bad weather in "The Raiders" th
in any half-dozen books he had ever read. And going ov
its pages for the purposes of this writing, I have been stru

[1] "The Raiders," p. 348. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

THE MURDER HOLE

To face p. 274



with the justness of the remark. It is certain that we do get a good many assorted kinds of evil weather in Galloway, and at such times it is better to be at home than on the slippery screes between Neldricken and Craignairny.

Still there is "something naturally prood in the heart of man," as the wisest and best of herds once remarked to me, "and puir craiturs that we are, we actually tak' a pleasure in outfacing the Almichty's ain elements!"

From Neldricken, the Rig of Enoch is seen to hang above us like a mural fortification. Little Loch Arron we leave away to the left. It is little more than a mountain tarn. For now all our thoughts are intent on Enoch—it is at once the most remote of Galloway lochs and the strangest.

Yet it is pleasant to be on Enoch-side when the sun shines—not so marvellous, indeed, as to see its whitening surges through the driving snow-swirls as the short fierce days of winter close in. Still, even so, and in the summer weather, there is ever a sense up there that somehow heaven is near, and the evil things of the earth remote. "Not with change of sky changes the mind of man," saith the proverb. But where Enoch is held up to the firmament as upon a dandling palm of granite rock by Nature, the Great Mother, the souls of men seem indeed to grow larger and simpler as they only stand and look.

Loch Enoch.

A few steps to the right along the ridge, and we can gaze down into the great basin of the Dungeon of Buchan. Here was built the Sheil of Hector Faa, and it was from this eyrie that his daughter Joyce looked out for his coming.

"Behind her, almost from her heels, fell away the great cauldron of the Dungeon of Buchan, wherein the white ground-mists crawled and swelled—now hiding from sight, and now revealing the three famous lakelets—the Round Loch, the Long Loch, and the Dry. There were also in the Dungeon gulf cloud-swirls, that seemed to bubble and circle upwards like the boiling of a pot. Yet all was still and silent up at the Sheil, so that the faint streak of wood smoke from the fire on the hearth rose straight up the cliff front, and was lost among

the heather and rugged brushwood above. Down in the cauldron itself, however, there was a veering unequal wind, or, rather, strife of winds, teasing the mist into wisps white as lambs' wool and light as blown gossamer."

Indeed, often as I have stood on this spot, I never remember to have looked into Buchan's Dungeon without seeing something brewing there. As soon as the sun begins to wester on the finest day of summer, with the first shadows, the cloud drifts and mist spume begin to weave a veil over the huge cauldron. The herds are used to call this phenomenon "the boiling of the pot."

This was what Patrick Heron saw when first he came to Enoch upon his fateful quest:—

"Presently I found myself on the topmost ledge of all, and crawling a few paces I looked down upon the desolate waste of Loch Enoch under the pale light of the stars. It is not possible that I should be able to tell what I saw, yet I shall try.

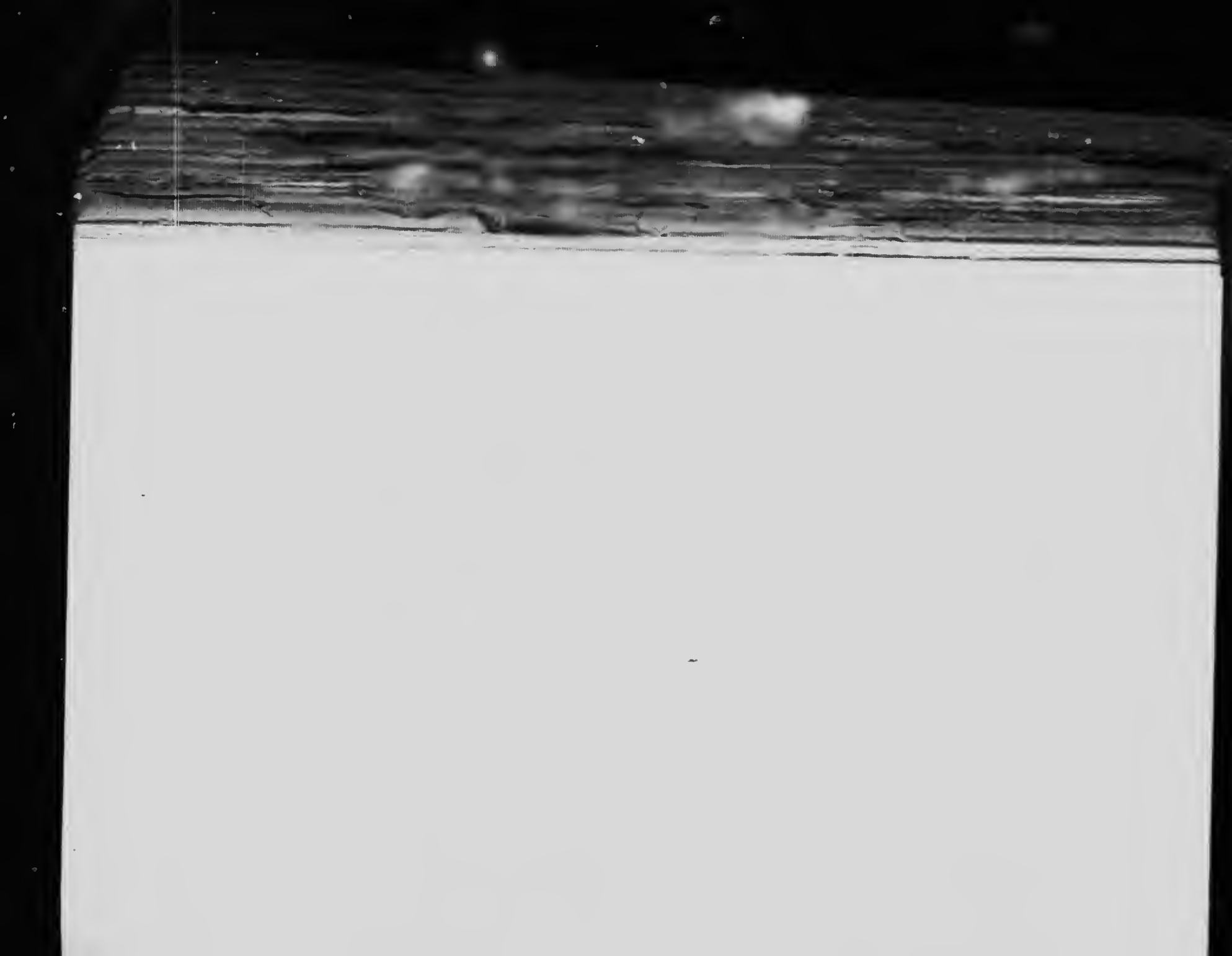
"I saw a weird wide world, new and strange, not fairly out of chaos—nor yet approven of God; but rather such a scene as there may be on the farther side of the moon, which no man hath seen nor can see. I thought with some woe and pity on the poor souls condemned, though it were by their own crimes, to sojourn there. I thought also that, had I been a dweller so far from ordinances and the cheerful faces of men, it might be that I had been no better than the outlaw men. And I blamed myself that I had been so slack and careless in my attendance on religion, promising (for the comfort of my soul as I lay thus breathing and looking) that when I should be back in Rathan, May and I should ride each day to church upon a good horse, she behind me upon a pillion—and the thought put marrow into me. But whether grace or propinquity was in my mind, who shall say? At any rate I bethought me that God could not destroy a youth of such excellent intentions.

The Dungeon of Buchan.

"But this is what I saw, as clearly as the light permitted—a huge conical hill in front, the Hill of the Star, glimmering

ON THE WAY TO THE R[illegible]ERS' LOCHS

To face p. 276



snow-sprinkled, as it rose above the desolations of Loch Enoch and the depths of Buchan's Dungeon. To the right were the great steeps of the Merrick, bounding upward to heaven like the lowest steps of Jacob's ladder. Then Loch Enoch beneath, very black, set in a grey whiteness of sparse snow and sheeted granite. Last of all I saw in the midst the Island of Outlaws, and on it, methought, a glimmering light."[1]

It is a far cry to Loch Enoch, but how much farther to Loch Macaterick and Macaterick's Cove. Sound in wind and limb are those who can make the journey there and back in a single day. Indeed the cave itself is not worth going so far to see. One hole in the ground is much like another, and Macaterick's (at least in its present state), is the meanest of holes and the humblest of caverns. But it is quite likely that in two hundred years there may have been some subsidence, and that when Macaterick was a householder there, the cave of the bold cateran was somewhat more worthy of his reputation.

As in the days of the Covenant, however, the way to it is still by the side of a burn which they call the Eglin Lane, a long bare water, slow and peaty, but with some trout of size in it. Also forth from the broads of Loch Macaterick there comes another burn with clearer sparkling water and much sand in the pools. There were trout in both, as one might see by stealing up to the edge of the brow and looking over quickly. But owing to the drought there was water only in the pools of Eglin, and often but the smallest trickle beneath the stones.

. . . . . .

"We started just when the heated haze of the afternoon was clearing with the first early-falling chill of even. The hills were casting shadows upon each other towards the Dungeon and Loch Enoch, and as we went, we heard the grey crow croak and the muckle corbie cry 'Glonk,' somewhere over by the Slock of the Hooden. They had got a lamb to themselves, or a dead sheep, belike.

"Then after a long while we found ourselves under the

[1] "The Raiders," p. 357. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

front of the Dungeon Hill, which is the wildest and most p
cipitous in all that country. They say that when it thund
there, all the lightnings of heaven join together to play up
the rocks of the Dungeon. And, indeed, it looks like
For, most of the rocks there are rent and shattered,
though a giant had broken them and thrown them about
his play.

"Beneath this wild and rocky place we kept our way, t
across the rounded head of the Hill of the Star, we caught
glimpse of the dim ountry of hag and heather that l
beyond.

"Then we held up the brae that is called the Gadlac
where is the best road over the burn of Palscaig, and so u
into the great wide valley through which runs the Eglin Lan
So guiding ourselves by our marks, we held a straight cours
for the corner of the Back Hill of the Star in which the hidin
place was.

"I give no nearer direction to the famous Cove Macateric
for the plainest reasons, though it is there to this day, and th
herds ken it well. But who knows how soon the times ma
grow troublous again, and the Cove reassert its ancien
safety. But all that I will say is, that if you want to find Cov
Macaterick, William Howatson, the herd of the Merrick, o
douce John Macmillan that dwells at Bongill in the Howe o
Trool, can take you there—that is, if your legs be able t
carry you, and you can prove yourself neither outlaw no
king's soldier. And this word also I say, that in the process
of your long journeying you will find out, that though any
bairn may write a story-book, it takes a man to herd the
Merrick.

"So in all good time we came to the place. It is half-way
up a clint of high rocks overlooking Loch Macaterick, and the
hillside is bosky all about with bushes, both birk and self-sown
mountain-ash. The mouth of the cavern is quite hidden in
the summer by the leaves, and in the winter by the mat of
interlacing branches and ferns. Above, there is a diamond-
shaped rock, which ever threatens to come down and block

LOCH ENOCH

To face p. 278

the entrance to the cave. Which, indeed it is bound to do some day.

"Wat and I put aside the tangle and crawled within the black mouth of the cavern one at a time, till we came to a wider part, for the whole place is exceedingly narrow and constricted." [1]

"Now the cove upon the hillside is not wet and chill as almost all sea caves are, where the water stands on the floor and drips from every crevice. But it was at least fairly dry, if not warm, and had been roughly laid with bog-wood dug from the flowes, not squared at all, but only filled in with heather tops till the floor was elastic like the many-plied carpets of Whitehall.

"There was, as I have said, an inner and an outer cave, one opening out of the other, each apartment being about sixteen feet every way, but much higher towards the roof. And so it remained till late years, when, as I hear from the herd of the Shalloch, the rocks of the gairy face have settled more down upon themselves, and so much contracted the space. But the cave remains to this day on the Back Hill of the Star over the waters of Loch Macaterick. And the place is still very lonely. Only the whaups, the ernes, and the mountain sheep cry there, even as they did in our hiding times."

The which is all very true, and a wonderful wild place is Loch Macaterick, but the ernes have fled, and the cave has grown yet smaller, so that I would not desire to mislead the unwary. Still because of the wildness of the scenery, the strange shores of the loch, and also for the joy of having been in one of the loneliest places in Scotland, there is always a peculiar pleasure in looking back on the days we spent in that wilderness. Given length of days and strength of limb, I mean to go that way again before I die.

Moreover, one can come back singing to music of his own composition the Rhyme of the Star Wife, perhaps that very lady who murdered the herd laddie by putting arsenic

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 273. (Isbister & Co.)

in his broth, as the shepherds are keen to relate. This the stanza :—

"The Slock, Milquharker, and Craignine,
The Breeshie and Craignaw,
Are the five best hills for corklit,
That ever the Star wife saw."

And what corklit is, you find out when you get there!

CHAPTER XXIX

GLEN TROOL

"FAR hae I wandered and mickle hae I seen!" But I hold to it that in the world there is nothing much more beautiful and various in its beauty than Glen Trool, from the Mennoch bridge to the highest waters of Glenhead Burn.

Yet just because it is so beautiful and changeful, it is difficult to describe. It does not lend itself to a single impression like Enoch or Loch Dee. There is something homely, cultivated, comfortable even, about its wildness. Yet there is the expectation of the Romantic in the air. As I go upward through the copses, I always glance right and left for a camp like that of Silver Sand upon Rathan shore.

"When I came in sight of the encampment I usually ran, for there I would see Silver Sand pottering about in front of his bit tent, with a frying-pan or a little black cannikin hung above his fire from three crooked poles in the fashion he had learned from the Gipsies. Whenever I think of Paradise, to this day my mind runs on Gipsy poles, and a clear stream birling down among trees of birk and ash that cower in the hollow of the glen from the south-west wind, and of Silver Sand frying Loch Grannoch trout upon a skirling pan."[1]

"Silver Sand."

Somehow, too, I always think of Trool as first I saw it, tremulous with broad flashing lights, reflected from the great cumulus clouds of a perfect summer day. But Trool has other moods, and her winter face is by no means her least

[1] "The Raiders," p. 64. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

attractive. Listen to Mr. Patrick Heron, who in his younger days knew the district well :—

"The yellow mist packed itself dense and clammy about us as we advanced. It had a wersh [raw], unkindly feeling about it, and as we rose higher up the water of Trool it hung in fleecy waves and drifts against the brow of the hills. But what I liked least was the awesome darkness of the sky. The mist was almost white against it wherever there was a break, yet itself was dark and lowering. A dismal, uncanny light that I cared not to look upon, pursued us and just enabled us to see."

It is worth while to adventure Trool thus, in the gloom of an oncoming snowstorm. The glen grows all indigo blue, crossed with wisps and streamers of whirling white. Beneath the loch lies black as night in the trough at the bottom of its precipices. You throw a stone down from a projecting arm of roadway, and it is lost to sight long before it reaches the water. Then, to quote Mr. Patrick again—

"The snow flew thicker, but in a curious, uncertain way, as though little breezes were blowing it back from the ground. A flake would fall softly down till it neared the earth, then suddenly reel and swirl, rising again with a tossing motion as when a child blows a feather into the air.

"As we went along the pale purple branches of the trees grew fuzzy with rime, which thickened till every tree was a wintry image of itself carved in whitest marble."[1]

Here is little change indeed, since the days of the Raiders. Yonder torrent glimmering white before us, whose roaring reaches the ear from far, is the Gairland Burn, and the path up its side is no better than of yore. That little low-lying isle in the water at the head of Trool is called Gale Island unto this day. The whaups still pipe overhead. The peats for winter use are stacked by the wayside, and the birds sing as of old in the fringing brushwood about the little bridges.

[1] "The Raiders," p. 335. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

ON THE WAY TO LOCH TROOL

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Standing above Earl Randolph's bridge I too have seen "the morning star burning golden-white in a violet sky." But all these things are only truly appreciated by dwellers as distinguished from visitors—which makes me fear that many who come to Trool and the country of the lochs solely for a summer day's jaunt, may return with the impression that I exaggerate the wonders of the Raiders' Country. But it is not so. Any shepherd with an open eye will tell you (or at least *can* tell you) far more wonderful things concerning it than any I have written.

There are pleasant quarters at "The House of the Hill," and much may be seen from there. But still, that is twelve good miles from Enoch and the Dungeon of Buchan, and altogether the old fastness keeps its secret well. Only to the stout of heart and the strong of limb is it granted to enter in and take possession.

Now at long and last we are out on the "wide good road," along which we can set our faces towards Newton-Stewart and Cree Bridge. As of old there are pleasant farm-houses about us, where the cocks are crowing near and far, and the blue reek goes up very friendly into the sunshine—and the name of one of these is still Borgan, "not far from a bridge where the waters come down tumbling white."

Of Newton-Stewart and of Creetown I have little to say. The former is the natural gateway and distributing point for much enchanted ground. It has good hotels, clean streets, and contains one of the most intellectual populations in the south. It was one of the last strongholds of Cameronianism in Galloway, and as a boy I learned much from the minister of Creebridge, the Rev. James Goold. But, to tell the truth, I am never easy in a town, even in a small one. I prefer to be out with Sweetheart on the spinning wheel, or a-foot on the heather with a staff in my hand and a camera on my back. Therefore let us be off!

Newton-Stewart.

"Soon we are crossing a pleasant land open to the south and the sun, with cornfields blinking in the hazy light, and

reaping-machines 'gnarring' and clicking cheerfully on e
slope. Past Ravenshall we go, where the latest Scottish re
sentative of the Chough or Red-legged Crow were, a few y
ago, still to be found—a beautiful but unenterprising bird,
since shouldered out of his once wide fields and lordship
the rusty underbred democracy of the Rook. A little str
let 'seeps' its way down through the ambient granite.
sacred to the memory of a good man, who for years ca
his drinking-cup in his pocket that he might use it
It is the very spot. Ah! no more will Sir James C
greatest of agriculturists and most lovable of men, pursue
pastoral avocations—'watering his flocks,' as he loved to
by taking out his guests to taste 'the best water in
Stewartry,' at this favoured well by the wayside.

"Refreshed by a draught, we mounted again and the
clean street of the Ferry town sinks behind us. We cl
up and up till we find ourselves immediately beneath
Creetown railway station, where signals in battle array
flanked against the sky; then down a long descent to
shore levels at Palnure. It is now nearly four in the af
noon, and we pause at the entrance of the long hill roac
New Galloway, uncertain whether to attempt it or no.
man drives along in a light spring-cart. Of him we inq
regarding the state of the road.

"'Ye're never thinkin' o' takin' that bairn that lang w
road this nicht?' he asks.

"It seems that the road is fatally cut up with the cartin
wood, that much is a mere moorland track, and the rest o
unridable. This might do for a man, but it will not do for
little Sweetheart at four o'clock of a September day. Th
fore we thank our informant, who races us, unsuccessf
but good-humouredly, along the fine level road toward Newt
Stewart, which smokes placidly in its beautiful valley as
goodwives put on the kettles for their 'Four-hours'' tea.

"Here we are just in time to wait half-an-hour for the t
—as usual. During this period the Little Maid became exce
ingly friendly with every one. She went and interviewed

BRIDGE OVER THE MINNOCH—ON THE ROAD TO LOCH TROOL

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very affable station-master, hand in hand with whom she paraded the platform as if she had known him intimately all her life."[1]

There is, besides, at Newton-Stewart, a lovely walk up to the Parish Kirk of Minnigaff, one of the most picturesquely situated in Galloway. Also the surroundings are kept with much taste and feeling for natural fitness. I do not know who is responsible for this, but whosoever it may be, I make them · him my very respectful compliments. It was not always thus—in so far at least as the clachan is concerned. Minnigaff is now only a pretty, wholly original suburb of Newton-Stewart. But it is far older than its neighbour across the way, and for long resisted the march of improvement.

Something like this was its condition at the time of "The Levellers."

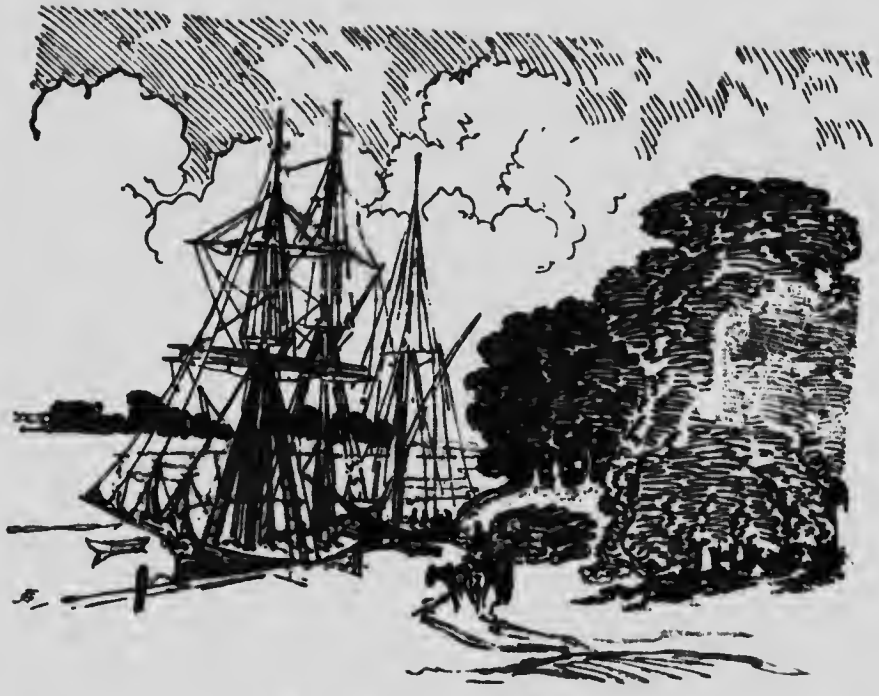
"The clachan of Minnigaff," writes the chronicler, "was certainly one of the most ancient in Galloway, and at that time it resembled nothing so much as a boulder-strewn hillside, with the spaces between the blocks of stone rudely roofed over and thatched with brown heather and yellow oat-straw. A few of these huts had their gables to the road which passed through up the left bank of the Water of Cree, but the greater number were set at any angle, as if showered from a pepper-castor.

Minnigaff.

"But whether duly oriented or dispersed at random, every domicile possessed another and often far larger erection before its door. This was the family midden—those edifices which in these latter days wise men have begun to study for what they tell of the life of the folk of bygone ages, but which, when considered contemporaneously and by means of the ordinary senses, are not pleasant objects for prolonged contemplation. These Minnigaff middens, I say, were in nearly every case larger than the parent house, or compound of dwelling and cattle-shed, whose inhabitants, human and bestial, had supplied the materials for its erection. Most of these

[1] "Sweetheart Travellers," p. 28. (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.)

middens, also, were set like mountainous islands in a sea o
liquid green filth, where ducks dabbled and squattered a
day, and in which patient calves stood winking the flies fron
their inflamed eyes, or to all appearance enjoying the coolnes
and the light aromatic breezes, as much as though they hac
been chewing the cud knee-deep in some rippling river o
lily-bordered lake."



THE HARBOUR, GATEHOUSE

CHAPTER XXX

WIGTOWN SANDS

I CANNOT take leave of the Galloway I know without a look once more at Wigtown, that quaintest, auld-farrantest county town (or rather county village) in Scotland. Something kindly and self-respecting there is about the very douce quiet of its houses. Its square seems permanently hushed as for an open-air communion. The tall trees where the rooks had once their homes, and so annoyed the burgesses, please me beyond words. If I had to live in any town, it would be Wigtown—especially if they would let the crows come back to their ancient dwellings.

These birds seem, moreover, to have been of some antiquity, for Provost Coltran is represented as shaking his fist at them in the great year of the "Pittin' doon o' the Lasses."

"There was Provost Coltran, going home late at night to his town-house, after he and David Graham had taken their nightcap together. Very evidently the Provost was carrying his full load. For in the midst of the ill-kept square of Wigtown, where certain tall trees grow, he paused and looked upward among the leaves to where the crows were chattering late among their younglings.

"The Town Crows."

"'Crawin' and splartin' deils,' he said, shaking one fist up at them, and holding to a tree with the other. 'I'll hae ye brocht afore the Toon Cooncil and fined—aye, an' a' your goods and gear shall be escheat to the Crown. Blood me gin I dinna, or my name is no Provost Cowtran! David Graham will be glad to hear o' this! He's aye keen on the fines!'"

As to that drowning of the Martyrs which, once and for ever, made Wigtown famous, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who has read Dr. Stewart's reply to Mr. Napier's "Case for the Crown" that "the lasses were indeed pitten doon!" They may have been reprieved in Edinburgh, but they were certainly murdered in Wigtown. Either the reprieve remained in Edinburgh to be found by Mr. Napier—or, if a copy was received by the executioners in Wigtown, it was quietly put behind the fire. No one who has lived among the descendants of those who saw the sight, or read the records of the local kirk-sessions, drawn up only a few years after the event, can have the least doubt that the crime was actually carried through to the bitter end. Though to argue the contrary will no doubt always remain a useful intellectual exercise for pushing members of the junior bar.

In "The Men of the Moss-Hags" I have tried to write a faithful and so far accurate account of what took place—that is, as faithful and as accurate as may be permitted to a romancer.[1]

"I will set down that day's doings as I saw them—but briefly, neither altering nor suppressing, because of this matter I cannot bear to write at large. It was but half-an-hour

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 365. (Isbister & Co.)

REMOTE LOCH TROOL.

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before the binding of the women that Lag sent for me—in order that I might see the thing done, and, as he said, carry the word to Sandy and the rest of the saints at Edinburgh!

"And this, as I told him, with all constancy I should be very fond to do.

"Now the Blednoch is a slow stream, which ordinarily flows in the deep ditch of its channel, wimpling and twining through the sands of the bay of Wigtown. The banks are steep slopes of mud, on which, if one slips, he goes to the bottom with a slide. Up this deep channel the sea comes twice every day, damming back the sluggish stream and brimming the banks at full tide. When Lag's men took me down to the water edge, I saw the two women already tied to stakes set in the ooze of the Blednoch bank. At the sight my heart swelled within me at once sick and hot. Margaret Lauchlison was tethered deepest down, her stake set firm in the bottom, and the post rising as high as her head.

"Nigh half-way up the steep bank stood our little Margaret, loosely reeved to a sunken stob, her hands clasped before her. She still wore the gown that I remember seeing upon her when she dwelt with us among the hills. But even in this pass she was cheerful, and lifting her eyes with a smile she bade me be so likewise, because that for her there was no fear and but a short pain. The two women were not tightly tied to the posts, but attached to them with a running rove of rope, by which they could be pulled close to the stakes, or else, at the will of the murderers, drawn up again to the bank, as one might draw a pitcher from a well.

The "Pittin" Doon o' the Lasses.

"Already was the salt tide water beginning to flow upwards along the Blednoch channel, bearing swirls of foam upon its breast.

"Margaret Lauchlison, being an aged woman of eighty years, said no word as the tide rose above her breast, where lowest in the river bed she stood waiting. Her head hung down, and it was not till the water reached her lips that she began to struggle, nor did I see her make so much as a move-

ment. Yet she was determined to die as she had lived, a honest, peaceable, Christian woman of a good confession—n learned, save in the scholarship of God, but therein of hi attainment and great experience. And all honour be to h for even as she determined, so she died.

"Then, when some of the soldiers were for fleeching wi her to take the Test, Lag cried out (for he ever loved h devil's-broth served hot):

"'Bide ye there! 'Tis needless to speak to the old beson Let her go quick to hell!'

"But Provost Coltran, sober enough this morning, ar with other things to think of than the crows, came to th bank edge. And standing where his feet were nearly on level with our little Margaret's head, he said to her:

"'What see ye down there, Margaret Wilson? What thin ye? Can you with constancy suffer the choking of the sa water when it comes to your turn?'

"Now, though Coltran was a rude man and pang full oaths, he spoke not so unfeelingly. But to him Margar replied, in a sweet voice that wafted up like the singing of psalm from the sweltering pit of pain:

"'I see nought but Christ struggling there in the water i the person of one of His saints!'

"Then the Provost came nearer still, and bending dow like an elder that gives counsel, said to her, 'Margaret, ye ar young and ken no better. We will give you your life gin y pray for the king. Will ye say aloud, "God save the king"?

"'I desire the salvation of all men,' Margaret said. 'Ma God save him an He will!'

"Coltran rose with a flush of triumph in his eye. He wa none so bad a man, only dozened with drink and bad company

"'She has said it!' he cried, and from far and near th people took up the cry: 'She has said it, she has said it! And some were glad, but many shook their heads for wha they counted the dishonour of submission.

"Now, Blednoch sands under Wigtown town were a sigh to behold that day. They were black with folk, all in scatter

THE MARTYRS' GRAVE, WIGTOWN

ing, changing groups. There were clouds of people on the sands when the lasses were pitten doon, and in every little company there was one praying. Through them patrolled the soldiers in fours, breaking up each little band of worshippers, which dissolved only to come together again as soon as they had passed.

"Then the town officer, a cruel and ill-liked man, who never did well afterwards all his days, took his long-hafted halberd, and, standing on the verge of the bank, he set the end of it to Margaret Lauchlison's neck.

"'Bide ye doon there and clep wi' the partans, Margaret, my woman!' he said, holding her head under water till it hung loose and the life went from her.

"The elder woman thus having finished her course with joy, they unrove the nether rope and drew little Margaret up to the bank, exhorting her to cry aloud, 'God save the king!' and also to pray for him, that she might get her liberty.

"For they began to be in fear, knowing that this drowning of women would make a greater stir in the world than much shooting of men.

"'Lord, give him repentance, forgiveness, and salvation!' she said fervently and willingly.

"But Lag cried out in his great hoarse voice, 'Out upon the wretch! We want not such oaths nor prayers. Winram, get the Test through her teeth—or down with her again.'

"But she steadfastly refused the wicked Test, the oath of sin. As indeed we that loved Scotland and the good way of religion had all learned to do.

"'I cannot forswear my faith. I am one of Christ's children. Let me go to Him!' she said, being willing to depart, which she held to be far better.

"'Back with her into the water!' cried Lag. 'The sooner she will win to hell. 'Tis a death too good for a rebel like her!'

"But Coltran said, 'Ye are fair to see, Margaret, lass. Think weel, hinny! Hae ye nane that ye love?'

"But she answered him not a word, being like One Other

before her, led like a lamb to the slaughter. So they drew her again to the stake, where the water was deeper now and lappered on her breast, swirling yellow and foul in oily bubbles.

"Her great head coverture of hair—which, had I been her lad, I should have delighted to touch and stroke—now broke from the maiden's snood, and fell into the water. There it floated, making a fair golden shining in the grimy tide, like the halo which is about the sun when he rises. Also her face was as the face of an angel, being turned upward to God.

"Then they began to drive the folk from the sands for fear that they might see the beauty of the dying maid, and go mad with anger at the sight.

"Whereupon, being in extremity, she lifted her voice to sing, calm as though it had been an ordinary Sabbath morning, and she leading the worship at Glenveroch, as indeed she did very well.

"It was the twenty-fifth Psalm she sang, as followeth. And when she that was a pure maid sang of her sins, it went straight to my heart, thinking on my own greater need:

'My sins and faults of youth
Do Thou, O Lord, forget:
After Thy mercy think on me,
And for Thy goodness great.'

"It was a sweet voice and carried far. But lest it should move the hearts of the people, Lag garred beat the drum. And as the drums began to roll, I saw the first salt wave touch the bonny maiden lips which no man had kissed in the way of love.

"Then the guards plucked me by the arm roughly and dragged me off. The drums waxed still louder. But as we went farther away, the voice of the maiden praising God out of the floods of great waters, broke through them, rising clearer, besieging the Throne of God and breaking down the hearts of men. I saw the tear hopping down many a rude soldier's cheek.

"Nevertheless, all the more because they were ashame they swore incessantly, cursing Lag and Winram back ar forth, threatening to shoot them for devils thus to kill your maids and weakly women.

"But once again in the pauses of the drums the words Margaret's song came clear. Forget them shall I never, ti I too be on my deathbed, and can remember nothing bu 'The Lord's my Shepherd,' which every Scot minds in h dying hour. These were the words she sang:—

'Turn unto me Thy face,
And to me mercy show;
Because that I am desolate,
And am brought very low.

O do Thou keep my soul,
Do Thou deliver me:
And let me never be asham'd,
Because I trust in Thee.'

"After the last line there was a break and a silence! And no more—and no more! But after the silence had endured a space, there arose a wailing that went from the hill o Wigtown to the farthest shore of the Cree—the wailing of a whole countryside for a young lass done to death in the flower of her youth, in the untouched grace and favour of her virginity."[1]

[1] "The Men of the Moss-Hags," p. 370.

THE MARTYRS' MONUMENT, WIGTOWN

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THATCHED COTTAGES, PALNURE

CHAPTER XXXI

TWO LAKELANDS

GALLOWAY AND CUMBERLAND

ONCE on a glorious first of October the snow was lying thick on the stooks as I went down into St. John's Vale and looked upon Derwentwater. Hardly a cornfield was cleared, and the blonde grain upon the tops of the sheaves looked up through the snow with an unaccustomed and pathetic chill.

Ruskin's House at Coniston.

Now in the last days of November, the primroses are in bloom under the home of the dead Master at Coniston. It may be that it has been chiefly my fortune to visit the Lakes in autumn, but to me the season seems to fit the country better than any other.

Yet those who live there all the year tell me that it is like the sun on the hills of Beulah, when in spring the blue hyacinth haze lies like peat reek in every hollow. But in spring I want to be farther from the snell breath of my own east wind; and in summer—well, there are few places on earth that can woo me from Galloway in summer.

"Autumn is Scotch and lingers lovingly among the hills."

So says the author of "Olrig Grange," that gracious poet-preacher. But, after all, Cumbria is also Strathclyde, and save for the fight on Dunmail Rise we might have made one compact kingdom of it from Clyde to Mersey, and been a thorn in the sides of those intruding Saxons to which the Irish one were but as the tickling of a thistledown.

Derwentwater I shall ever remember. It was, I think, in 1889, and on the first day of October in that year, that I saw the splendours of full autumn shine from under the veil of white like an arrayed bride on her way to the altar. The long smooth slopes of Helvellyn were smoother than ever—sleeked and polished with glistering snow. The nearer ridges, Walla and the Castle Crag, stood black against the pure new-fallen drift.

But most of all I shall not forget the Vale of St. John on that first of October, and the snow lying heaped and chill among the sheaves—the tall stooks blonde like meadow-sweet, growing through frozen wreaths. Of course, even in a day the snow melted from off the corn, and the farmers of the vale led in the grain no whit the worse. The October sun was hot, and the shores of Derwentwater flamed into sudden crimson and gold, like the sunset of a stormy day.

Yet nevertheless Lakeland is "no my ain hoose—I ken by the biggin' o't." But it is a fine "hoose" for all that, and there is happiness to me in sojourning in it. My land is Galloway, and that I love best, even as I love mine own Sweetheart better than another's sweetheart. Once I said that Galloway was like a plain maid with beautiful eyes—and not so very plain either when I come to think of it—but with eyes

THE COAST, NEAR WIGTOWN

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that are frankly blue and outlooking. For she smiles up at us from her thousand lakes and tarns, which reflect the sky and the clouds, and make beautiful her most desolate scene.

The lakes of Lakeland are fewer, larger—more intentional, as it were, on Nature's part. But in Galloway, whenever you conquer a mountain summit, there is every chance that you will find a "Dhu Loch" lying a few steps beneath you, with chance flaws from the clouds of the hill face playing upon it. A typical Galloway loch is Loch Valley, which flashes upon the traveller like the transformation scene of a picture as he mounts one of the little hillocks of "jingling stones"—the Loch Valley "terminal moraine," about which geologists have so much to say. How far it appears to reach from east to west, running beneath the rocky Jarkness from horizon to horizon, the wild treeless slopes of the ancient Forest of Buchan closing it in! Above it there is only the desolation of the older land towards Enoch and the stars. And may all the gods of solitude defend the passes, that the rail come no nearer to birch-fringed Trool and the white water of Gairland, where it leaps down its lonely steep and hastens to the loch between grassy banks, under which the shy trout sulk and upon which the bog-myrtle grows.

The Lakes of Lakeland.

Yet it was gladsome, too, when, from a "little-lit tourelle" built like a swallow's nest on the side of a beautiful house, I looked my first upon Coniston Lake and saw the white dwellings of men sprinkled liberally on the opposite side of the water. I saw the reek of the morning meal going up from them, and a burst of steam told me of the locality of the station, where in the blackness of the night I had arrived. Then I allowed within me that Coniston, with her "Old Man" smoking his morning pipe and looking down on the lake, was among the world's choicest of pleasant places.

The scene as I saw it then was arranged to take the unwary by surprise. It was that hour of dawn which all my life I have most loved. As I laid a finger upon the cord, of its own

accord the blind sprang upwards, and lo! there below me were the shining levels of the lake and the dawn red behind the hills to the east. An equal wind, chill but not dank, was blowing, and the white houses of Coniston village looked right friendly at me across the bay. A good land, even though not mine own!

CHAPTER XXXII

THE DIARY OF AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GALLOWAY LAIRD

In this chapter I intend to give a sketch, brief but accurate, of the condition of the farmers and their dependants on a small Galloway estate towards the close of the eighteenth century, from the private notes and shrewd personal jottings of a most remarkable man.

I do not mean to enter into the previous career of Mr. William Cuninghame, the writer, though that was successful and worthy in the highest degree. Mr. Cuninghame, though belonging to an ancient and honourable Ayrshire family, the Cuninghames of Caprington, had to be the architect of his own fortunes. He went out to Virginia as a young man, where he rose to position and honour as the American manager of what would be now called a "tobacco trust." Upon his return to Glasgow he became almost at once the ablest and most renowned of those "tobacco lords" whose wealth and influence first gave to Glasgow the commercial supremacy which she has never since lost.

The Laird himself.

But William Cuninghame used his abilities in business simply as a means to an end. His heart was with the land, and like a worthy cadet of a good name, from the first he set before him the ideal of a family estate and the restoration of the ancient fortunes of his house.

The unexpected death of an elder brother put him in possession of the little Ayrshire property of Brighouse, to which in 1779 he added the much larger estate of Lainshaw. In 1781 he bought Kirkwood, near Stewarton, and finally in

1786 the lands of Duchrae in Galloway, to which last the diary and papers in my hands have reference.[1]

These private memoranda are to me specially interesting, not only as breathing a spirit of kindly shrewdness and clear-eyed observation, in parts also a humorous appreciation of character—but because they give, with all the precision of a business document, the condition of those very moors and braes on which, nearly a century later, it was my own lot to "pu' the gowan," and harry the curlew of his marled eggs.

Already at the time of his first coming to Galloway, Mr. Cuninghame was a considerable laird, as well as a man of wide note and fame. He does not give the exact price at which he purchased the Duchrae estate ("by private bargain immediately after the roup"), but as the reduced upset price was £10,500, we may take it that Mr. Cuninghame's bargain was something well on the under-side of that sum.

There is little of the Pepys element about the diary of our business-like laird. On the contrary, his purpose is made clear on the very first page.

"As it will be necessary for me to be here (upon the lands of Duchrae) at times when I shall be at a distance from my books and papers, this MEMORANDUM BOOK is intended for my government and direction." Not a man to be put upon, this laird of Lainshaw, but at the same time evidently concerned to do justly and to love mercy. First of all, however, he must *understand*. Then he will deliberate, judge, and act. He begins his record as follows, italics and all:—

"For my government and direction."

"LAINSHAW, *26th July* 1787.—Having last night returned from Duchrae, where for the first time I have been since the

[1] By the kindness of Captain R. D. Barré Cuninghame of Hensol and Duchrae, I am permitted the use of the private diary written by his grandfather, Mr. William Cuninghame of Lainshaw, who purchased the estate of Duchrae on the 2nd February 1786, and who visited it shortly afterwards to make the acquaintance of his new tenants. The good, kindly, far-seeing man of affairs speaks on every page. I may add that these memoranda were written "for his own information," and have never before been published.

16th current, I found by every observation I made while there, and by the general information from every Gentleman in the neighbourhood, that my present *Tenants* there are exceeding good men, *Honest* and *Wealthy*, and in short that they are a sett of the *best Tenants* that are on any Estate in the neighbourhood, but that they questioned much if they would give additional rents on new Tacks. Therefore it is my duty and interest to retain them upon the Estate by giving them every reasonable encouragement in my power—not only during the currency of the present tacks, but also in due time, to engage their continuance on new Tacks even if the rise of Rent should be but small."

The Duchrae Tenants.

These "tacks" or leases, dating most of them from about 1770—that is, sixteen years before Mr. Cuninghame's coming to Galloway—were, as he says, in general easy and humane. The Duchrae property was divided into four farms, three of them comparatively large, the other (the small detached holding of Drumbreck) much smaller. So that in this neighbourhood it is evident that the Leveller movement of the earlier part of the century had indeed done what the people feared—that is, it had swept away the small holdings, and either driven the cottiers and crofters to emigrate, or reduced them to the status of hired labourers upon the larger farms.

The well-to-do tenants on the Duchrae estate had bound themselves to pay "the whole of the public burdens of the parish—the whole minister's stipend, teind, and schoolmaster's salary, with kirk and manse stents." They must grind their corn at the Duchrae mill, paying "multures," "miln dues," and "services." In addition they promise to attend baron courts, to obey the acts thereof, and to pay the officer. They agree to carry their proportion of the materials for rebuilding kirk or manse, and to keep in repair all dykes, ditches, and drains, as well as the office-houses on their farms.

Public Burdens.

But these conditions, hard as they now seem, were mild and equitable compared with those which prevailed upon the

opposite side of the Water of Dee, where the patriarchal "No lease" system of year-to-year tenancy was still in vogue, interpreted, however (as it seemed to Mr. Cuninghame), with some considerable personal kindliness. Still the method was fatal, in that the tenants of the Parton estates had small encouragement to improve their farms, but on the contrary every reason to take as much out of them as possible.

We cannot but admire the shrewdness of our good Laird Cuninghame, who, with an eye at once kindly and alert, proves himself indeed "a chiel amang us takkin' notes"—although the "prenting" of his observations has been deferred for a hundred and twenty years.

He goes everywhere and sees everything. Then, ere he retires to rest, he writes his "observes" down in enduring ink for his own "future government and direction." A wise and much practised man, this laird. Just, also—most just. He will pay to the uttermost farthing. No man shall suffer by him. But he knows the pleasure of making another do by him in like fashion. He will employ no factor or middleman, if he can help it—preferring always to deal directly with principals, rather than permit any third person to come between himself and his tenants.

"While at Duchrae I endeavoured, as it is mostly good grazing ground, but much of it of an uneven surface, to find out for my future government in granting New Tacks, what sheep and black cattle each farm is capable of maintaining through the year, as well as the quantity of croft and arable ground, as is the method of estimating the value of farms in Peebles-shire. But I found that impractable [*sic*] because my Tenants there depends chiefly on grazing bullocks (Irish and Galloway) which they are constantly buying and selling. So often at times some of these do not remain more than two weeks upon the Estate. For instance when I was there, one of the tenants sold a parcel of Galloway Bullocks which had been partly 3 months with him, partly 2 months and partly only a few days, the

The Cattle Dealing.

NEARING NEWTON-STEWART

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whole to be delivered to the purchaser upon the farm the following week. He informed (me) that Cattle was then in great demand and that he had made great profit by them. More, as prudent men, they will not say. They keep in general but few sheep. And as for their milch cows, consisting generally of about one dozen upon each farm, they count nothing upon them in paying their Rent, the milk being used partly in raising young cattle for bullocks and heifers (for which beneficial purpose they allow the calves to suck through the season one half of their mother's milk), and partly made into butter and cheese—which they generally consume in their own families—*what little of either is sold, being the perquisite of the wife, not to account to the husband.*"

Again, with a sharp and peppery pen, Mr. Cuninghame strikes off a character sketch, when the sometime friendly relations between him and his neighbour of Airds suffer a sudden eclipse. Here Greek meets Greek, or rather as it might be said, Greek meets Goth! The Virginia planter and Tobacco Lord comes across the common "packman," and we need not inquire which will have the best of it in good breeding and the conduct of affairs. But the ex-packman also is a man and a fellow Scot. To a certain meadow he has a right or he has not a right, but no Ayrshire laird or Tobacco Lord shall fright him out of a penny-worth that is legally his own. Here is the laird of Airds of the time preserved for us in Mr. William Cuninghame's characteristic prose:—

"JOHN LIVINGSTON of Airds in Kells parish (but partly called Airie in Balmaghie parish), full 40 years old, married and has children. The Estate he bought judicially in 1784 from the Creditors of Alexander McGhie at the upset price of £2517, 14*s.* 4*d.* stg.—rent including Teinds belonging to the Chapel Royal, £136, 3*s.* 11*d.* stg. Mr. Livingston was born in this neighbourhood and inherited a small farm from his father, giving £30 or £40 yearly, which with the above Estate of Airds and another late purchase of a farm or two, yields him as reported, from £250 to £300 Stg. yearly. He commenced early in life as travelling

The Packman.

packman in England, trading until lately for those 10 years past chiefly Scotch light goods bought up in Glasgow, which was his chief residence and (where he) had rooms. He carried from thence to England, in which he made money, but, it is reported, not so much as to pay his purchases, running to from 4 to £5000 Stg.—there being still remaining on his Estates some heritable debts for which he grants new security. Having called on him twice on business while here, by fording the Dee (which indeed is dangerous without a guide) before the junction with the River Ken, by the Road through my wood of Tornoroch almost opposite to his house, his whole conduct and character by ('general' deleted) Report, shows him to be still the low-bred designing packman, void of honor, troublesome and assuming in his neighbourhood. He has a vote upon Airds for a Member of Parliament, but which it is reported must be bought before any candidate upon a competition gets it. He has been married about 3 years to a small Laird's daughter in the county, who appears to be full 30 years old, and they seem to live in their (farm) house, (such as it is at present, being one of two wings, having a floor above the ground part, and built by McGhie)—in dirt and nastiness. But indeed he is now building a new house betwixt the offices, which is covered in, two stories high, plain, and will be somewhat better than a minister's Manse. He has a deal of natural woods on Airds, etc., mostly sold by him last year, to an English Company for upwards of £700 Stg., now a cutting. This is the Gentleman who claims a Right to my Brockloch meadow—so far as cutting its grass yearly for hay."

As we read we can see the pair waxing hot, each after his manner, the cool-headed laird of Duchrae having, of course, his foe at an advantage. For, though firm, he is open to compromise. Nay, when Airds declares that he will defend his plea, though only worth twelve shillings in the year, as if it were the whole value of the estate—(we hear the type speak in these words, never plainer!)—Mr. Cuninghame is ready to buy out his rights if he has any. He will even confirm his enemy's letting of the Brockloch meadow to the ferryman at

the Boat-of-Rhone. We do not know what happened exactly. There is no further reference to the matter in the laird of Duchrae's journal, but it is long odds that the Airds scythemen no longer crossed the water half a mile down to cut Mr. Cuninghame's hay.

Here is the continuation of the journal, as he went abroad to spy out the land :—

"That I might have an Idea of this wood of Duchrae Bank, now fitt age for cutting, I went through the whole on the morning of the 24th, Andrew McMin of Urioch being my conductor. In his house I afterwards breakfasted. I found that the wood consisted but of small bounds, planting irregular, with a deal of brushwood owing to its not being taken good care of in its infancy ; but few oaks and ashes—and few even of those, particularly of the oaks, good.

"I was informed by Andrew McMin and afterwards more particularly by David McClellan of Mains that the proprietor of Airds, now Mr. Livingston, has been in use to cutt yearly for Hay a piece of meadow ground on the banks of the river Dee (called a day's darg of a man), and part of the Mains farm, called Brockloch Meadow (but pretending no right to eat it, which indeed they never attempted to do) which my Tenants beleeved had been cutt for hay yearly, past the memory of man, by order of Airds. This (tradition says) was allowed them by the Duchrae family as a compensation for bringing to the Mill of Duchrae their whole grindable grain, but they beleeved this could not be proved at this distance of time ; also that Mr. Liviston refuses to bring his grain to the miln, denying any right I have, or obligation upon him to come thereto. They further informed me that the present Castle Stewart, my immediate author, had declared upon a late contested County Election, when the late Airds voted against him, his intention of prosecuting him for cutting the grass, or for 'concealed multers,' but that they supposed nothing was done in it, owing to Mr. Stewart's immediate embarrassed situation. Notwithstanding he frequently declared Airds having no right to the grass as

The Meadow Law-Plea.

aforesaid, about which I also spoke to Mr. Samuel McCaull the factor on the sequestrated estate, who had never heard of it. I went over to Airds and had a conversation with him thereon, asking to see his title thereto. He answered he had purchased the Estate in August 1784, judicially, that his Rights were in Edinburgh in the hands of his agent, that Brockloch was advertised as a pendicle of the Estate, that he would show me the advertisement, which however on looking for he could not find. 'But,' added he, 'We have had possession of it much above 40 years, which gives me an undeniable Title to the cutting of the grass.' He admitted however that we had right to graise upon it after the Hay was carried off yearly. He denied his being obliged to carrie his corn to my miln as the consideration. He agreed however that he would, as requested by me, write his agent in Edinburgh to examine into his Titles and to show the same to my agent there, Mr. Moodie. He admitted that the meadow was about half a mile below his property on the opposite side of the River Dee, and that his Estate is mostly on the River Ken before it joins the Dee. He said that he had rented it along with his ferry-boat which crosses the River higher up, meaning the Ken, and that it might be worth 7, 10 or 12/- a year—and that he would contest his right as keenly as he would do for his whole Estate, etc. I answered, if I found he had no Right to it, I should most certainly endeavour to recover, but that it would be rediculous for him and I to thro away at law ten times its value, which would assuredly be the case on going into the Court of Session. 'Therefore if it is found,' added I, 'that you have right thereto, I will buy that right from you—you suppose the value as above—we shall call it 10/- yearly value, upon which I will pay you 25 years purchase, which is £12. 10/-. Is this agreeable to you?' He answered it was, only he would inspect it, having never as yet seen it, and enquire more particularly into its value and write to me. He accepted the price offered, but that as he had rented it as above for 6 years (of which 5 years still to run), he must buy off the Tacksman. I answered he might make himself easy as to that, as I should

confirm his agreement for the 5 years with the boatman at the same rent. So thus it stands, and I must write Mr. Moodie as well as to Castle Stewart upon it."

The characters of the other neighbouring lairds are sketched with a masterly hand—doubtless as before for the author's "guidance and direction," but also with a quite human appreciation of their humours and foibles.

The Laird of Cally is an absentee and he pays his gardener no wage—which in itself explains why the new laird of Duchrae is refused entrance to Cally gardens. The unpaid servant is no doubt feathering his nest, and this business-like visiting stranger might very well have been coming to spy out the land in the interests of an absent owner.

"Upon the 22nd I went to Newtoun Stewart, by Mr. Murray's of Broughton (situated within 400 yards of the very neat small village of Gatehouse of Fleet, where there is an exceeding good public-house). His house is very large and elegant, being about 60 by 60 feet, built all round with the granet stone peculiar to that country and is entirely wrought with picks. The shrubbery around it is also very extensive and well laid out, but there is no quantity of real drest ground here. There is in the principal Drawing Room some very fine pictures. The furniture of this Room, as well as of the dining room and another of much the same size all on the first floor, as well as the finishings, are very plain, excepting a very elegant statuary marble chimney-piece in the drawing-room. Second floor consists of, after landing at the head of the stair,—one bed-room, a large passage in the middle, and on each hand two large bedchambers, in each a single bed, plainly mounted; and in the attic storie, there is the like passage and on the right 3 bedchambers with each a tent bed, and on the left 2 bedchambers, one of them large with three tent beds, and the other containing one. The Kitchens, etc., are on the west end of the house with a covered way, mostly covered with young planting, the stables, cow-houses, etc., are very large, partly in the form of a large court closs upon the High road, and about

The House of Cally.

300 yards from the house. Being refused admittance into the garden through some mistake, I viewed it on the outside from some waving ground which surrounds it. I found the walls inclosed 2 acres of ground, having two cross brick walls running across it, one having a hott house for stone fruit and another for grapes; walls round about 13 or 14 feet high and well covered. This garden may be about 500 yards from the house and on the opposite side of the high or military Road. None of the family living there at present the gardener draws no wages, and besides upholds the same for its produce, from which it is reported he drew last year about £70 Stg. His stone fruit he sells at 3 and 4/- per doz. From this village I went the shoar road, leaving the milatery road on the right, to Boat of Cree, a small village, passing Sir —— Hannahs' Estates and intended new house, the foundation of which was only in part cast, the main body of which will only be 75 by 50 and each of the wings on a parelel line about 50 feet. Many of these granet stones were lying prepared, some of which I found 7 feet long. From thence I followed the milatery Road to Newton Stewart, a pretty considerable village which I reached to Dinner after a pleasant ride of near 40 miles. I past that evening with Mr. Samuel McCaull,[1] for the purpose of seeing whom this ride was taken, breakfasted with him next morning, paid him £5 Stg. for his postages and trouble incurred with me about Duchrae. Returning that evening by the military road to Gatehouse of Fleet and from that through the Muirs to Woodhall, distance about 25 miles in all."

Captain Laurie of Woodhall.

Next comes the account of a visit to Captain Laurie of Woodhall, and in a few lines we are made to see this quietly dignified, unaffected soldier, a man of no ceremony—somewhat soured indeed by the fact that he has no son to succeed him, and that (in so far as he makes outlays on the estate) he is spending

[1] The land-agent for "Castle-Stewart" from whom Mr. Cuninghame bought Duchrae.

his labour for naught. He takes, it seems, "grassums" or pecuniary gratifications upon giving leases of his farms. Which being interpreted, means that, being doubtful whether he will live nineteen years, the average duration of a Scottish "tack," Captain Laurie takes a large slice of the rent at once, to be followed by smaller yearly payments. This, of course, cannot be in the interest of the estate, for few tenants can afford to pay out the "grassum" without borrowing — still less when entering and stocking a new farm.

Yet we can see that Mr. Cuninghame cannot find it in his heart to blame the taker of "grassums." He is his host, at whose house he stays seven out of the first ten nights he is upon his property. And there is evidently something very human and likeable about that tall grave figure which guides him by the footpath across to his own property, through the lane and over the water-meadows out upon the whinny knowes of Duchrae—then as now earthly paradises of birds and wild flowers.

"WALTER SLOAN LAWRIE, Esq., of Redcastle, but constantly residing on his Estate and house of Woodhall in Balmaghie parish, is from 50 to 60 years old. He is maried, but never had a child. Woodhall house joins my property immediately on the west. My farm of Urioch is seperated from it partly by a pritty considerable loch, and partly by a small rivulet of water running through some meadow ground emptying itself into the Loch, which meadow ground is mostly overflowed in winter by the loch, owing to backwater from the River Dee. And again a mile further south he almost surrounds my farm of Drumbreck, which farm is seperated from my other lands. This gentleman is possessed of an Estate as reported of £2000 to £1800 Stg. a year, situated in 5 or 6 different parishes, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and County of Wigton, under three distinct entails to heirs male. (To two of these he succeeded, from his father who was originally a writer in Ayr and who acquired them through his wife about 30 years agoe when he left Ayr.) The third he

acquired himself in marriage with his wife, a Miss Cutler, to whom he has been married about 9 years. Her Appearance is delicate, of a sweet countenance, a genteel appearance, but rather silent and with little animation. The three different Estates go to three different heirs of taillie very distantly related to him, excepting the one by his wife. Having had about 15 or 20 years agoe some little acquaintance of Captain Lowrie when he was in the 43rd Regt. quartered in Glasgow, I took the freedom of going directly to his house the evening I reached Duchrae. This continued to be my head-quarters, having sleept there 7 out of 10 nights I continued in that country, during which time I was generally employed upon my estate through the day. I was here received very hospitably. They keep a good table, the best I had occason to see in that country, but are rather retired. He is very silent, of no ceremonie, and otherwise very plain, seemingly steady, resolute, attentive to his interests, quite easy in his circumstances, laying by money yearly, but rather soured and discouraged from making additions to his house, which was rather small and inconvenient, and improvements upon his estate, from the having no children or even a male nigh relation. This induces him to take *grassums* when renting his farms. He has a sett of good offices, forming a square about 200 yards south of his house, built lately by himself. His garden betwixt the house and offices contains about one acre of ground inclosed with a good hedge, and covered with many good old trees. Here they entertain their Tenants, many of whom comes from a distance, while engaged leading in and stacking their peats, Hay, etc.—the first a mighty work, being their chief fewal." [1]

By such stray allusions we can see into the heart of things down in Galloway during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and no "State of Agriculture" is so shrewd and comprehensive as this journal of Mr. William Cuninghame's. It

[1] Captain Laurie of Woodhall entertained his tenants very differently from the sea-board laird mentioned in "The Dole of the Thirteen Herrings."

is indeed fitted to correct some impressions left by the perusal of Mr. Graham's very admirable but unduly pessimistic volumes on the social life of Scotland in the eighteenth century. Mr. Graham has indeed illuminated all that he has touched, but upon the two subjects—religion and the state of the farming classes from 1740 to 1786—an equally convincing book might be written, showing that in Galloway at least (which has always been considered the most backward province of the Lowlands) things were very much better than Mr. Graham would have us believe.

Social Life in Galloway.

The state of the farms and of the tenants themselves I will come to presently. But the whole relation of these Galloway lairds to their people appears a kindly, a courteous, and even a patriarchal one. Mr. Cuninghame, upon many of his visits, dwells among his tenantry. He is treated as an honoured guest, but by no means bowed down before or flattered. Man to man they meet him. A son of the richest tenant on the estate is called upon to decide the worth of certain grazing privileges, which will be forfeited if the wood in the Duchrae bank is cut down. The young man takes two days to arrive at a decision. We can see him standing, gravely computing what his father and he will lose by the new arrangement—knit brows, bonnet pulled well down, neither anxious to favour the new powers-that-be (who may one day have the letting of a larger farm), nor yet willing to do anything unjust to the interests of his father. He will not "blood the laird." Neither will he curry favour with him. So after maturest consideration he assesses the damage at two bullocks of the value of five pounds each. And on that basis, without a word the bargain is struck.

In spite of the business-like sentences of the record we can see the young man meditating how to do justice, and the keen eyes of the old Tobacco Lord, man of affairs, triple laird, watching him with a kind of pleasure.

We can almost hear him say, "I wish I had had that young man in Virginia. I could have made something of him."

Here is his own account of the matter.

"Having been applyed to by an English company through Mr. Livingston of Airds, whose woods they are presently cutting, to know if I would sell them such woods as I inclined to cutt, I made answer that as my wood of Duchbrae Bank was of a proper age for cutting I inclined to sell it. But as damages must be paid the Tenant, for the liberty of cutting, burning, carrying away and haining the woods afterwards, during the remainder of his Tack (*and as I always incline to do all my business with the partie I have to do with, without troubling a third*) I aplyed to the Tenant, William McConochie, a young man, son of James (McConochie), who is the richest tenant on the estate, to know what I must allow, desiring him to think of it and to inform me. He accordingly, after two days' consideration, informed me he reckoned the ground was equal to the maintainance of two Bullocks through the year, which he valued at 5 guineas yearly, upon which terms I might proceed to sell, cutt, etc., when I pleased. Less he could not take, as the shelter of the woods through the winter, with the food therein, was of importance to his cattle."

On another occasion the laird of Duchrae crosses the Ken and visits his neighbour, Glendinning of Parton, the descendant of a very ancient family of Glendonwyns, though making little of the fact. Here again we have in a few lines a word-picture of this eighteenth-century Galloway establishment. "Mr. Glendinning, the master, is a Catholic, but noways troublesome with it," says the good Protestant and Hanoverian laird of Duchrae. In spite of his Catholicism the Laird of Parton has recently fitted the parish with a minister—very much to its taste—a fine young man with whom he is on good terms. He has a pretty, latitudinarian, non-churchgoing wife, a Presbyterian by birth, but, like her husband and his Catholicism, apparently "noways troublesome with it."

The Laird of Parton.

That pretty Mistress Glendinning should never have set

foot in the parish church is a thing far more to be resented than (as was universally believed in Galloway at the time) that her husband worshipped the Pope's toe. Indeed, the Roman Church has never been treated as a very serious enemy in Presbyterian Scotland. Preachers referred to her picturesquely in books and sermons as "The Scarlet Woman" and "She-who-sitteth-upon-the-Seven-Hills." But Black Prelacy has ever been held the real enemy. There is infinitely more chance of Scotland returning to the Ancient Religion than of her becoming Episcopalian. And the greatest blunder the nineteenth-century lairds of Scotland ever made (and one which may cost them dear some day) was that of leaving their Presbyterian churches for a form of worship alien to the spirit of the nation.

Pretty Mistress Glendinning.

At the House of Parton our shrewd observer gives us another glimpse of habits social. Like a prudent man Mr. Cuninghame is no hard drinker. But if his host sets him the example, it is obvious that compulsion is laid upon him to do likewise. A gentleman at the table of his nearest neighbour can no more refuse a challenge to drink than in the City of Tombstone to-day, when the invitation is made along the shining tube of a revolver.

Moreover, Mr. Cuninghame has a slight headache, "the first which has troubled him since his coming into the country," and he would rather be excused from a too purple hospitality. But he could not refuse to drink if that should happen to be the rule at Parton. Imagine, therefore, his relief when he finds his host make a move for the open after drinking a couple of glasses of wine. They take a walk together, returning in time for tea—which is about the best treatment that could have been prescribed for Mr. Cuninghame's headache. No wonder that he is pleased. He sets the seal of the highest commendation upon his host of Parton, and incidentally gives us another clue to his own sedate character. "Mr. Glendinning is," says the chronicler, "a man exceeding sober—which pleased me much."

But the sketch of the Parton laird is worth printing in full.

"WILLIAM GLENDINNING, Esq., of Parton and Parton parish, and Patron thereof, is from 40 to 50 years old, maried and has children, seperated from me and exactly opposite, particularly to my farm of Mains of Duchrae by the River Dee. This River, from nigh Kenmore house to about 2 or 3 miles below this (at the ford leading to Greenlaw), has I am informed at no time less than 35 feet of water in the Channel and in the winter it spreads greatly, covering the whole meadow ground on both sides. This gentleman is of an old family of the Roman Catholic persuasion, but no ways troublesome with it. He is possessed of an Estate, I understand of £500 to £600 Stg. yearly, but easy circumstances, having also money. He is genteel and very polite in his deportment, esteemed and well-spoken of in the neighbourhood. He has lost by some accident one eye. He married a daughter of the deceased Mr. Gordon of Crogo, writer in Edinburgh, to whom he was a guardian. By her he got (it's said) about £3000, but she does not indeed appear to be endued with great sense. They live at present in the old Mansion house, which appears hardly habitable. But he is building at 2 or 300 yards distance therefrom, an elegant small strong good house, which he expects to get covered in before winter. From this part of the Estate and house, which stands high on a rising ground immediately from the River, the best and most beautiful (if beauty may be allowed to be applied here) prospect of my estate of Duchrae is obtained—comprehending the Mains, Ulioch, Meikle and Little Craigs, and a great part of Drumglass farm—all which indeed would, if the lands were improved by cultivation, appear to great advantage and very beautiful from this Bank. Mr. Glendinning, though a Catholic, has lately given the parish much satisfaction in a minister who is a sensible clever young man, and with whom he lives on the best terms. Mrs. Glendinning, who may be about 26 years old, was bred

a Presbyterian, but professes now (it's said), no religion, having never been once in the parish church. Being there on a Friday I noticed the children are to be educated as Catholics. Having received a card from Mr. Glendinning at Drumglass apologising that he was prevented, as intended, waiting upon me there, owing to an accidental fall from a scaffold and inviting me to dine with him that day, Thursday, or any other most convenient to me, I returned for answer that I would (do) myself that honour next day. I did accordingly, was received very politely and with much ease. He appears to be exceeding sober indeed, which pleased me the more—having that day a small headack and the only one during my absence from home. Accordingly having each of us drank two glasses of wine to dinner, we waulkt out until (we returned to Tea), to the top of the rising ground a little to the north of his house from which a good part of his Estate is seen, and where his Tenants appeared from their crops to be improving their farms considerably with lime—they having not as yet us'd any marle. But what astonished me, was his informing me that the whole was done at the expence of and by the Tenants themselves, and also that he had not one Tack upon his whole Estate, they being all Tenants at will, but that he never removed any person so long as they continued to manage their lands to his mind. He allows them to take no more than three successive crops, even on such improved ground and then to rest six years. On this information I professed much astonishment, adding that there must be indeed great mutual confidence, and very particularly they in him. 'But,' said I, 'upon finding any of your tenants not maneging your lands as you direct, you will certainly find some difficulty in removing them and must be under the dissagreeable necessity of raising a process of removal before the Sheriff.' He answered he never had occasion to do so yet. I left him in the evening, declining his invitation of staying all night, by crossing over in my Tenant David McClellan's (of Mains) boat (whom he spoke highly of). He

Tenants at will.

had carried me over and continued in waiting for me. I was very well pleased with my visit, promising to see Mr. Glendinning on being again at Duchrae."

Gordon of Balmaghie.

Of Gordon of Balmaghie, though he has had longer acquaintance with him, our diarist has less to record, perhaps for that very reason. The laird and patron of the parish is the wealthiest of those who have recently acquired land—with the probable exception, that is, of Mr. Cuninghame himself—who, modest man, makes no comparisons as to his own possessions, but takes all men as he finds them. Mr. Gordon has a house in London, where he gives dinners of the best, and is fitting up the old house of Balmaghie for a summer residence. It is curious to reflect that by far the greater number of those names which the laird of Duchrae found occupying neighbouring estates have now disappeared. They were new-comers in 1786, but still newer comers occupy their places, and of all the Galloway possessions of this once wealthy family of the Balmaghie Gordons, all that now remains to them is no more than the burying-ground, a square overgrown clump, with a small mortuary chapel in the centre, through the windows of which the bird-nesting urchins of Glenlochar and Shankfoot used to gaze with awe upon the marble monument of "The Auld Admiral"—or knock on the door and run away, half expecting the inmate to give chase, his traditional cocked hat and pigtail showing above the sheeted graveclothes.

"THOMAS GORDON, Esq., of Balmaghie, in the parish of Balmaghie and Patron thereof and Titular of the Teinds, about 50 years old, married to a sister of George Dempster, M.P., has children; a younger son of a family in the Stewartry, purchased this Estate judicially in November 1785—Rent £450 yearly, price £10,500 Stg. It is generally said by the Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood that he made the best purchase of any in the County. This Gentleman, having still a house in Madeira, he has resided for some years with his family in

London, where my son Thomas and I dined with much elegance when in London last April. He has workmen repairing his house here for the purpose of his living there mostly through the summer. He has, I was informed, lately purchased the Dornells, joining to me on the South, which I find to be very wild indeed."

Lastly, though there is little personal liking in the case, and though Mr. Cuninghame is obviously of a very different way of thinking in matters religious, his best sketch is that which he gives of the Sheriff of the County, Mr. Gordon of Greenlaw, who had first of all invited him to be his guest, probably having had already, in his legal position, some dealings with the new proprietor of the estates of Duchrae.

The Sheriff is a remarkable man in many ways. He is (says Mr. Cuninghame) deeply in debt, though apparently it is not debt of his own making.

The Covenanting Sheriff.

Sheriff Gordon of Greenlaw is a Cameronian by persuasion, though he attends the parish church—a fanatic and a favourer of fanatics at any rate. He hales his unwilling guest off to church, because it is Fast Day, where the laird of Duchrae, who would rather be improving his mind and his digestion in the open, has willy-nilly to listen to a long and "very ordinary" sermon. Thereafter his host takes him to see the Loch of Carlinwark and his famous marle dredgings. Marle is a kind of earth to which great fertilising qualities were at the time attributed. It was sold at so good a price that a canal was actually made between the loch and the river Dee, in order to supply it to farmers throughout the country, and also with some idea of shipping it coastwise to other places less well provided.

The Sheriff, who perhaps has been attending only partially to the "long and ordinary" discourse of the minister, presses so hardly upon his guest to buy four hundred acres of land and the loch with its marle, that the laird of Duchrae has to tell him that the purchase will not suit him at all. And that for the sufficient reason that he does not believe it would pay

anybody, save some one on the spot who could give all his attention to the working—an opinion which time has amply verified.

But this remarkable Sheriff has other claims on our attention. He sets off to Kirkcudbright—good ten miles—on foot, holds his court there, walks back to Carlinwark, where he apparently occupies himself with his loch marle till it is time to go back home to Greenlaw. He is certainly a man most diligent in business, though his manner of serving the Lord is not like that of Mr. Cuninghame—who is above all things a moderate man, and likes a neighbour, if he be a Catholic, to be noways troublesome about it, and if he be a Cameronian or high Covenant man to be zealous without ostentation.

It is to be remarked that in speaking of the Sheriff's wife he styles her Mrs. Dalrymple, that being her maiden name. Indeed the practice of married women being called or calling themselves by their husband's names was still far from universal in Galloway—just as Janet Hamilton, the much-testifying wife of Alexander Gordon, the "Bull of Earlstoun," staunchly signed herself by her maiden name, and even her husband, editing her "Covenantings" after her death, describes them as those of Janet Hamilton. Here is, therefore, necessarily somewhat abridged, Mr. Cuninghame's account of the Cameronian sheriff of Kirkcudbrightshire:—

"ALEXANDER GORDON, Esq., of Greenlaw in the parish of Crossmichael, of which he is Patron—and Sheriff of the County. Having received a polite invitation by letter from him by one of my Tenants at Dumfries on my way back from London, inviting me to stay in his house on my coming to Duchrae, I returned for answer I should certainly do myself the honour of waiting upon him. I accordingly went down there on Wednesday the 18th (being 6 or 7 miles off) and remained until the 20th in the morning, taking that opportunity of calling upon Mr. Philip Morison, minister of Balmaghie, from whom I took an exact minute of the stipends my land presently pays. Thursday the 20th being the fast day of the

parish, we all attended church, about 2 miles off, during the morning service, where we heard a very long and very ordinary sermon, after which Mr. Gordon and I took a ride across the country—in which attention there was much politeness, I having been afterwards informed that Mr. Gordon's disappointment must have been great on account of his losing the afternoon service. We rode chiefly through the Estate of Mollance, where indeed I saw many and very fine fields of corn, partly by the improvement of marle within itself and partly with lime. We came in by Greenlaw village (deleted) or rather Carlingwark village, close by the loch, which was begun only a few years agoe by Mr. Gordon, and may contain now upwards of 100 houses and apparently rapidly increasing. For which place he informed me he had applyed to the Crown for a charter erecting it into a Burgh of Barony, with power to choose their own Baileys and Council, which he said would cost him about 40 guineas. Mr. Gordon informed me he had upon this Estate about 800 acres of ground, 400 acres of which with the Loch he wisht to sell, being much involved in debt and having a large family. This intimation he put to me so closs that I was obliged to tell him it would not answer me to purchase, neither would it in my opinion answer any person but one who resided at or near the spott. Mr. Gordon I take to be only about 36 to 38 years old. He married very early, before 20, to a Miss Dalrymple of Dalragget, who I take to be older than him. He is a very industrious man, undergoing great fatigue, giving his whole attention to his Loch, excepting two days of the week during the sitting of his Court, when, he setts off on foot in the morning for Kirkcudbright, 10 or 11 miles from his house, does his business and returns always the same evening also on foot, summer and winter. He seems to be a zealous and even ostentatious professor of religion, paying vast attention to all the fanatics round him, of whom he is considered the head. Mrs. Dalrymple is of an active and managing appearance, who has the sole direction and management of the small farm in her own hands, which she appears to manage

"Carlingwark Village."

well, having good crops of corn and grass. Their house is large and of an elegant appearance, having been built by the Kenmore family, from whom he bought it with the whole lands, by his Mother's advice, before he came of age. Offices numerous and midling good, with a good Kale yard adjoining containing more than an acre of ground enclosed and well sheltered around, with a deal of planting."

Let it not be forgotten that when the Laird of Lainshaw and Duchrae came first into the Stewartry, the Sixteenth Louis still held his own in France. The affair of the diamond necklace was just settled, and the gruesome account of the cruel punishment of Madame de la Motte appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that very year. Gretna Green was in the height of its fame, the most interesting marriages in every journal being headed "At Gretna Green," just as a marriage announcement might now begin, "At St. George's, Hanover Square." Rafts of highwaymen were hanged at Tyburn every week. Sheepstealers graced the gallows at Kirkcudbright or were sent to Dumfries if the Stewartry practitioner had been taking an alcoholic holiday.

Yet in Galloway itself there seems a complete peacefulness. The days of Raiders and Levellers had long passed away. Doubtless there was still a great deal of quiet smuggling along the coast, but inland our laird does not come across any trace of it, or at least does not mention it.

Peace in Galloway.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of his narrative, and one which I mean to quote *in extenso*, is that which deals with the farm life of the estate. His farmers, he is informed by all the neighbouring lairds, are good men—no better or more trustworthy to be met with anywhere. And the new proprietor of Duchrae meets them worthily. He spends nights at their houses. He is there to dinner and tea, and he gives us, not a glimpse merely, but a complete picture of their condition.

"From the present very high price of cattle, they would willingly keep more milch cows for the purpose of raising their

calves, were it not for the great expence and inconvenience of keeping them in condition through the winter. Their small crops of corn, and what bog or meadow hay they have in patches of ground here and there, and on the bank of the Dee, is quite insufficient for this purpose. In respect to Horses, each keeps 3 or 4 good horses, which indeed is not only necessary for their farms, because they all raise more corn than they consume in their families, but also for riding about buying their cattle. For instance, two sons of Samuel McClelland's of Uloch were six times in Ireland in 1786, buying bullocks for the farm which they mostly drove to the St. Faith's market in England yearly. And in respect to their arable grounds (particularly that used in tillage) it is generally in patches or small fields from 1 to 4 acres, seldom more. This is partly owing to its being interspersed by broken rocky ground, small pieces of moss, swampy or meadow ground, and partly owing to its poverty, being all of a thin soil."

Practically, however, the farmers of Balmaghie were as well off, as comfortable in all essentials as they are to-day. Indeed, it comes to us with a sense of surprise, how little change there has been. They rear cattle and the sons act as dealers in Ireland and even as far as England. Sheep are not so largely reared, but mutton-ham tastes as toothsome to the Ayrshire laird "sliced upon a plate" as it is to-day at some hill-farm under the lee of the Merrick. The butter and eggs are the well-deserved perquisite of the farmer's wife, as we hope they are unto this hour. But it is to his cattle that the farmer looks to pay his rent. The rent-day is arranged with care by Mr. Cuninghame, who recognises the value of a clear understanding on both sides. His farmers are to ride twice a year to Lainshaw to pay their rent to their laird in person, at times when they will have the money in hand, after certain cattle trysts where they can sell their beasts to the best advantage and at the best seasons.

Well-to-do Farmers.

"They live well, having one and all, Beef and Mutton dried ham in their houses, which they sett down sliced in a

plater, with good tea, neat prints of good fresh butter, with very good oatmeal cakes to Breakfast or of an afternoon, and good bacon for dinner or when a stranger is with them. And for entertaining such at night they have in all their houses, the Stranger's or best bed-chamber, neat and clean, consisting of a four-posted bedstead, neat and clean curtains, good clean beds, sheets, blankets and coverlet. Indeed in two of the houses most of their other beds are much in the same situation —particularly in Drumglass, where there are two beds of the above description in two rooms below—one for his mother, and another for his sister. While above stairs are 3 beds with curtains in one room, besides the servants' beds in another garret. As a prooff of the above I breakfasted and dined one day at Drumglass, where there is in the Room—being the one which Miss sleeps in (who I understand has a fortune of 3, 4, or £500 Stg., and is dressed neat and clean at all times)—two good square mahoganie dining-tables, and a mahoganie breakfast or tea-table, with a complete tea-service of china, silver spoons, tongs, and Trea (tray), with abundance of stone-ware for dinner. There is a servant woman in waiting for changing your plate, and serving you with bread and bear during dinner, after which glasses are put down to each, with the Rum bottle. I breakfasted at Urioch, and drank tea one evening at Uloch with the respective Tenants and their families. David McClelland, the Tenant in Mains, is particularly respected by the gentlemen for his probity and honesty, and is also an able man."

Drumglass Comforts.

This bi-annual rent-riding is a curious circumstance, and shows that Mr. Cuninghame has resolved that he will have to do with no third parties. He must know his tenants personally. If he has anything to say to them, he will ride over and say it on their own door-step. If they have anything to say to him, they must out with it face to face or not at all.

There is a fine directness and simplicity about all Mr. Cuninghame's arrangements. He makes a bargain, but he does not haggle.

"Make your proposition. I will consider it. If it is just I will accept it. If not, not."

Our laird is an honourable gentleman who has had large experience, and knows exactly the value of time. When first he rode south he marked the distances, the inns, and what could be obtained at them. He is therefore able to give the clearest information possible to his tenants for their direction on the trips to Lainshaw—where without doubt, they will find themselves both generously and amply entertained.

Among all his farms Mr. Cuninghame is evidently most impressed with that of Drumglass. It is here that he stays when among his tenantry. The daughter of the house pleases him. She is always neat and clean, well educated (of course), with a fortune large for the time and country—altogether evidently a prize in the local marriage market.

He sleeps in the fine four-poster bed, which (like the lady of the house) is also remarked upon as being neat and clean—besides being curtained from draughts when the wind blows about the windy eminence on which the house stands. With a sigh the tired laird of Lainshaw snuggles his weary limbs between the sheets, and draws up to his chin the warm blankets and coverlets with a sense of genial well-being. He is pleased with his purchase, pleased with his tenantry, pleased with his hostess. He reflects that he will not rack-rent them, neither cause them to leave his farms unlet on his hands. He knows that the ability to keep good tenants on his land is etter than a few pounds of extra rent.

Sound is his sleep, and in the morning he awakes to a Galloway breakfast, porridge doubtless, though he does not name them, of a thicker consistency than those of Ayrshire. (The plural demonstrative is used advisedly.)

It may be surmised, however, that the good folk of Drumglass thought porridge beneath the dignity of a laird, and took theirs early in the morning before the great man got up. At any rate they did not scant him of other provend. Beef and mutton ham sliced on platters, fresh scones of divers sorts, oatmeal cakes in farles crisp from the girdle, and pats of fresh

butter set out in a lordly dish. The fare was noways to scoff at in Drumglass in those old days, whether by laird or lout, clerk or layman.

Back from the hills he comes to dinner, sharpset with the appetite which awakens so readily betwixt the Bank of Duchrae and the Ullioch Cairn. Bacon ham is waiting for him, with potatoes doubtless, bread and home-brewed beer, and with a glass or so of spirit out of the square-faced Dutchman from the corner cupboard. Can the sum total of a just man's contenting farther go?

Thereafter came tea, talk, and in due time again the four-poster. Men fare worse than at honest Drumglass where it looks down on the shining levels of the Water of Dee, and faced a broad view—not (be it understood) for æsthetic reasons, but "for the greater conveniency of keeping their doors clean." That is to say, the farmer heaved his rubbish down the slope!

In the essence of things there is mighty little difference to-day, though something has been effected by the County Authority, to whom wise men have spoken in the gate with regard to drainage and pig-styes.

Of course there were many things behind all this which our grave and sober laird did not see. Country mirth and jollity were subdued before him. Riot avoided his steps, and doubtless many an odorous dub was drained and many a fat midden-head abated at the mere whisper of his coming. But that is the wont of others besides Galloway folk, and in times more recent than the Year of Grace 1786.

Nevertheless Mr. William Cuninghame saw in Galloway a land of comfort, bien and real—a grateful, contented, solid folk, dwelling in ceiled houses, costing as much as seventy pounds each at a careful estimate. And he found men standing firmly upon their rights, thankfully enjoying the fruits of their labour in this life, and looking out not unhopefully to the next.

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